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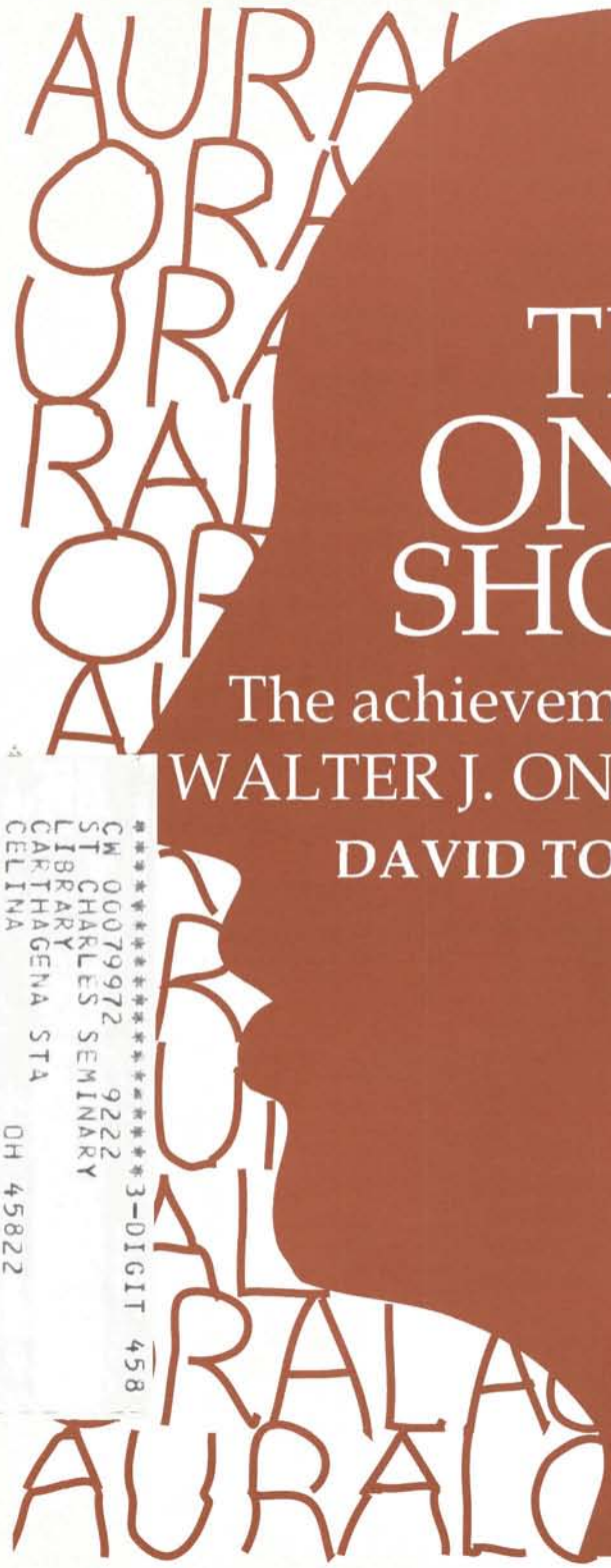

THE ONG SHOW

The achievement of WALTER J. ONG, S.J.

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REPORTS FROM SANTO DOMINGO
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An editor's notebook: CLINTON'S ELECTION
Margaret O'Brien Steinfels

Media: Frank McConnell: My first half century

Screen: Richard Alleva: Goodby Columbus

BOOKS:
CHRISTOPHER LASCH on Postmodernism
KENNETH L. WOODWARD on Sidney Callahan
NANCY M. HAEGEL on Wallace Stegner
JOSEPH A. KOMONCHAK on Cardinal Newman
LAWRENCE S. CUNNINGHAM on everything else ("Honesty compels me to admit to not having read all the entries but I have browsed through each volume with some small degree of thoroughness.")

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CORRESPONDENCE

Virginia remembered

Evanston, Ill.

To the Editors: Virginia Volini Marciniak's unutterably moving poem [October 23] prompts me to write. I knew her as a college student, a fellow worker at Saint Benet Shop in Chicago, the mother of my godchild, Kate, a fellow traveler to Europe twice, and a dear friend. Not once in all that time did she mention cancer, pain, suffering. Heroic!

NINA POLCYN MOORE

Relaunching the YCW

Oak Park, Ill.

To the Editors: Thank you for including Mary Good's review of my recent book on the Young Christian Worker story [*A Time of Awakening*, Loyola University Press] in your excellent issue on the laity [September 11]. Many of my friends who are *Commonweal* subscribers sent me copies in case I had missed it.

In recent months we have seen a growing interest in relaunching the Young Christian Workers and Young Christian Students. Cardijn Associates, a loosely knit organization of former YCW and YCS members, has received a number of inquiries about how to go about it. We have also learned that a number of groups are actually in existence, one a high school YCS group in a nearby parish in my own suburb. Will wonders never cease?

MARY IRENE ZOTTI

The writer is an editor of Cardijn Newsletter, *"For and about Former Young Christian Workers in the U.S.," 210 S. Wesley Avenue, Oak Park, IL 60304.*

Rational rationing

Milford, Del.

To the Editors: In his criticism of the Oregon request for a Medicaid waiver ["Rationing in Oregon," September 25], Thomas Higgins made a very telling point about the need for holistic judgments about individuals in triage decisions. Perhaps the choice between the twelve-year-old boy with leukemia and the terminally ill patient was ill-conceived, but faulty judgments are going to be made in any foreseeable type of medical care. It seems to me that Higgins overlooks the larger question that Oregon's proposal was intended to address: Is it better to use a finite amount of money to broaden coverage for prenatal care, pediatric preventive care, and treatment for more acute illnesses which require medications rather than for procedures that generally do not restore individuals to a high quality of life?

It is true, as Higgins pointed out, that this proposal was limited to Medicaid and AFDC recipients, but looked at in the context of furnishing broader care to a larger number of this group, it seems tendentious to view this decision as merely a political one.

Granted that experience may reveal serious defects in the Oregon proposal, the federal government's disapproval of it has interfered with what could be a very instructive state initiative in improving access and controlling costs.

W.P. PORTZ

NFP: What it takes

Storrs, Conn.

To the Editors: I am saddened that William Talbot [Correspondence, October 9] is still able to persuade himself that natural family planning (NFP) is not a form of contraception. The distinction he makes, also made in *Humanae vitae,* ignores what is actually involved. While NFP is, when practicable and under ideal circumstances, probably indeed the best and safest form of contraception from a medical, humane, and spiritual point of view, it is unquestionably contraceptive in actual practice.

Natural family planning requires a diligent focus upon the question of possible fertility. (This is why it has also become a priority method for the successful treatment of *in*fertility.) It is based upon a daily sympto-thermic temperature chart requiring morning readings every day before getting out of bed (even if the baby is screaming for attention), personal examination of cervical mucus tests, careful charting of one's illnesses, stresses, moods, unusual events, etc., and a firm awareness that the time of ovulation may well be thrown off schedule not only by illness but by any extended travel, by changing work schedules, by emotional upheavals of any sort. All this has real advantages in terms of self-understanding, but it makes for an excessive emphasis on the sexual aspect of marriage, and it certainly does not leave "every marriage act open to the transmission of life."

The method requires extensive abstinence (or alternative behavior) during the months of breastfeeding or the years of menopause. Under ordinary circumstances, unprotected sexual intercourse must be limited to approximately seven days per month. Thus any couple seeking to obey the papal injunction to responsible parenthood must plan their whole married life around this calendar, rather than around their *duty* to give each other comfort, communication, and emotional support whenever it is needed. But

(Continued on page 30)

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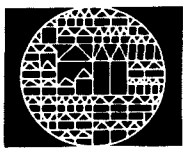

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Priests & sex

Certainly there is an element of sensationalism in the recent media coverage involving Catholic priests and the sexual molestation of children. Prurient interest, a staple of popular culture, accounts for some of this fascination. The very idea of celibacy as well as Catholic attitudes and beliefs about the sacramental character of sexuality, so at odds with the utilitarian ethos of secular culture, also make Catholic clergy an inviting target. Exposing the sexual hypocrisy or worse of Catholic priests is an old story and an old controversy. So Catholics have reason to think that the front-page stories reflect as much the culture war over sexual issues as they do genuine alarm over priests and pedophilia.

But skepticism about the mixed motives of the press should not lead to complacency, nor to denial that church authorities failed to ensure the safety of children. A bureaucratic propensity to protect the organization, coupled with a poor understanding of sexual psychopathology, led church officials to put institutional reputation before regard for victims. Public scandals involving Covenant House founder Bruce Ritter among others, lawsuits, and the work of reporters such as Jason Berry (*Lead Us Not into Temptation*, Doubleday) in New Orleans, have compelled the church to face the problem. The kinds of procedures and safeguards that should have been there all along are finally being put in place. As Cardinal Joseph Bernardin announced in September, in establishing a path-breaking independent (six lay persons and three priests) review board for the Archdiocese of Chicago, the church's first concern "is the safety of children."

Bernardin's efforts should be a model for the church nationwide. In addition to the review board, Chicago's program includes a lay administrator with expertise in the pathology of child abuse to review cases, a victim-assistance minister, psychological screening and preventive educational programs for the clergy, public reporting requirements, and centralized personnel record-keeping. Church leaders must not underestimate the toll even the appearance of laxity in these matters takes on the faithful. Catholics want to trust their priests, but the institutional structure of the church, where decision making and clerical assignments take place out of the public eye and beyond lay influence, makes it tempting to equate hierarchical governance with clerical privilege, including a lack of accountability. Bishops must err on the side of public disclosure in these matters.

How the church failed in the past and what needs to be done is becoming clearer. But it is easy to let natural revulsion over such crimes blind us to the clinical nature of pedophilia and the difficult therapeutic steps that can lead to repentance and reconciliation. Canice Connors, O.F.M. Conv., a staff therapist at St. Luke

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Institute in Suitland, Maryland, a treatment center for priest pedophiles (men attracted to prepubescent children) and ephebophiles (men attracted to adolescents), also cautions against drawing unwarranted conclusions about the priesthood from such incidents. "Celibacy did not create the problem of child abuse," he wrote in *America* (May 9, 1992). "Nor is there any evidence that the effort to live celibately exacerbates the problem." "Loose chatter on pedophilia" helps no one, least of all the victims, he warns.

Those inclined to use the scandal of child abuse to condemn the celibate priesthood are misinterpreting the evidence and promoting the worst stereotypes of priests. Still, to the extent that celibacy remains a difficult task that priests fail at, whether they are heterosexual or homosexual, there is some evidence that an attitude of denial may exist among the clergy. Some critics suggest that broken vows of celibacy—and what some characterize as a "clerical homosexual subculture"—make it harder for priests to confront their peers about abusing children. If that is the case, the church has a more serious problem than even the current scandal indicates.

Sexual malfeasance by the clergy is hardly an isolated issue. The explosive nature of this controversy is linked to the church's general lack of credibility on questions of sex. A church that forbids the use of artificial contraception, yet 90 percent of whose members disagree with the ban, is not an institution whose pronouncements on sex are readily believable. Sadly, some of the eagerness to believe the worst about priests stems from the everyday knowledge of the enormous disparity between what the church teaches about sexuality and what its clergy and faithful actually believe and practice. When it comes to priestly celibacy, artificial contraception, the status of women, divorce, homosexuality, sex outside of marriage—and, in fact, abortion—the church's persuasiveness even among its own is weak and perhaps waning.

The hierarchy's failure to engage these questions honestly, imaginatively, and with a high degree of pastoral skill, is an ongoing scandal all its own. Now, perhaps more than at any other time in recent memory, the Catholic witness to the sacramental nature of human sexuality needs to be heard in a world that longs for such a hallowing of life and love. Sidetracked by an understanding of "natural" birth control that approaches mere fideism, the church forfeits the opportunity to find compelling ways to communicate more abiding truths about sexual morality.

Catholicism can help restore much of what is missing between men and women today by affirming its traditional belief that sexuality is part of God's design, a sign of his love and of Christ's relationship to his church. More important, facing up to the inadequacy of its current teaching will enable the church to reclaim a vital and living appreciation of freely chosen celibacy as a way of bearing witness to the Kingdom of God. The radical embrace of the sexual paradoxes of celibacy is one of the most palpable signs of Christ's presence in the church and the world, and one of Catholicism's great spiritual strengths. But for that reality to flourish the institutional church must find the courage to bring a new honesty to all that it has to say about sexual life.

AN EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

'SAFE, LEGAL & RARE'

SLOGAN OR SUBSTANCE?

Some of my younger friends are charmed by the idea that this is the first presidential election in which they voted for the winner. The flurry and flutter around the candidate-couple and the prospect for change summon images of the Kennedys but with a partnership a long way from pill box hats and the touch football boys' club.

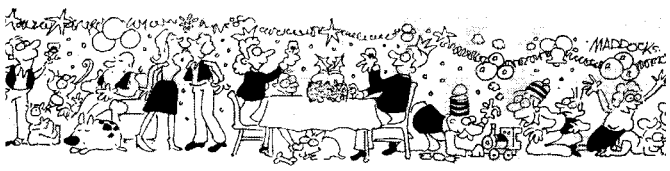
Some of my older friends (New Deal division) would brook no criticism of Clinton before the election. The Democrats had a chance in '92, so no caveats please. After the election, they are feeling not just nostalgia but genuine relief that Clinton put the old coalition back together—working and middle classes, ethnics and blacks, Catholics and Jews, union members along with Reagan Democrats, working-class white men. This is the kind of coalition many Americans think America is all about.

Watching the Democrats in July, who would have guessed that Clinton shared this tradition? After twelve years of Reagan-Bush, what could have been more depressing than watching a winnable election being lost by factionalism and ideological posturing. Refusing Pennsylvania Governor Robert Casey a place on the podium while allowing a Republican woman to attack his (moderate) position on abortion law was—not to put too fine a point on it—just plain stupid. The eager embrace of homosexual rights as a mainstream party issue seemed a certain loser. And then, in an acceptance speech clasping to his heart the middle class, its works and values, Clinton virtually ignored the poor, the vulnerable, the homeless. While the Democrats' love of the poor can sound like vaporous rhetoric (tinkling bells, and all that), no rhetoric at all was disheartening.

At that point, the puzzled voter could reasonably ask, and she did: Except on abortion and gay rights, how was this guy really different from George Bush?

But, thank God, the Republican convention did not fail us; their pandering went beyond ideological posturing. So back to the tried and true: the lesser-of-two-evils choice.

Clinton claimed he was different. And the campaign proved him right. His image of the Democratic party was more coherent and comprehensive than the party's own view. So was his attitude toward the electorate and his articulation of the country's needs. With a notable exception, everyone, during the campaign, was said to be welcome. Yes, the unemployment



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rate, a sluggish recovery, the decline of real wages, and long-term economic conditions helped get his message across. Every parent's fear that the kids would never find a decent job was the stealth emotion. And hey, at least one kid did get a good job—elected in the nineties by a thirties' coalition.

But this isn't the thirties. No world war (thank God) is on the horizon to pull us out of economic disarray. Delivering on the economy will be part luck, part not scaring rich people too much, and part tight-wire policy making that will cut against the grain of important members of this coalition.

And then there is the coalition's inherent fragility. Except for the state of the economy it could never have been brought back together. The first thirties' coalition was socially conservative and economically liberal. Insofar as it still really exists, it remains so. Yet the Democratic party has gone in the opposite direction, economically conservative and socially liberal.

Where does Bill Clinton stand?

The sixties had two animating passions—personal liberation and communitarianism. Much of sixties communitarianism was drawn off into marginal issues (remember Abby Hoffman) and turned from mainstream politics. The liberationist baby boomers took flight and in a fit of cultural irony landed in the Reagan revolution. The boomers and the RR, each in its own, and sometimes contradictory, way converged to make individuals vastly more important than communities, personal autonomy more central than social solidarity. Individualism, self-fulfillment, and rights talk overshadowed communalism and social responsibility. Where does Clinton stand?

The answer rests on which cluster of values represents his real passion. Which will animate his appointments, his policy making? Clinton evokes social solidarity: "We can leave no one behind." But the Democratic party, the party platform, and many voters are prepared to leave at least one group behind. Abortion-on-demand is not a communitarian impulse.

Clinton's position as governor of Arkansas, at moments in the campaign, and in answer to questions from the United States Catholic Conference suggest that he is not far on abortion from the position represented by Governor Casey's Pennsylvania law; Clinton too favors parental consent and a twenty-four-hour waiting period. He says that he believes "abortion should be safe, legal, and rare." In support of the first two goals, he promises to sign some version of the Freedom of Choice Act; he will lift executive orders restricting abortion in federal facilities. Why does somebody who invokes the Catholic social tradition, and who does remind so many Americans of what, at its best moments, this country has been about, seem so lame on the one issue that really does require a passion for leaving no one behind?

Abortions will be safe and they will be legal. What will Clinton do to make them rare? He has been called to a bully pulpit; he can use it to persuade, argue, plead—just like the rest of us. "Safe, legal, and rare." Flying that banner, he will have to live with ambiguity or a high level of disingenuousness—and work for something better.

Again, just like the rest of us.

MARGARET O'BRIEN STEINFELS

REPORT FROM SANTO DOMINGO—I

CELAM & THE VATICAN

PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR DICKERING

"During all the goodbys, I couldn't help thinking that a lot of bishops must be wondering whether this was worth the effort and money."

That was the unusually pointed observation of Monsignor Robert N. Lynch, general secretary of the United States National Conference of Catholic Bishops, on October 28, shortly after the bishops of the Latin American Episcopal Conference filed out of the Cathedral of Santa Maria in Santo Domingo, which dates backto 1514. The dominant sentiment, he felt, was "a sense of relief that it was over."

The Latin American Episcopal Conference, known by its Spanish acronym, CELAM, meets approximately once a decade, bringing together bishops from twenty-two nations in South and Central America and the Caribbean. Its meetings in Medellin, Colombia, in 1968 and in Puebla, Mexico, in 1979 were landmark events in the life of the universal church, putting the authority of a continent's bishops behind the "preferential option for the poor." This year's meeting was scheduled to be no less significant. Delayed to coincide with the celebration of the 500th anniversary of Columbus's arrival in the New World, the meeting began on October 12 in Santo Domingo, one of the places where Columbus had landed.

Pope John Paul II's lengthy opening address augured a productive gathering. The pope hewed to the main lines of a working document that had been hammered out over several years of consultation among Latin America's bishops. They had rejected drafts that worried more about the dangers of secular culture than the deepening misery of millions of ordinary people. Massive poverty, the bishops had insisted, would remain the starting point for their reflections on the theme of "new evangelization." Despite this promising beginning, the days that followed were frustrating for the roughly three hundred bishops delegated by each country's national conference to go to the Dominican Republic.

What happened at the meeting is clearer than *why* it happened. The working paper was treated simply as a background document rather than a preliminary draft for the bishops' deliberations. Large chunks of the early plenary sessions were spent listening to four major lectures on themes already stated in both the working paper and the pope's address, or to a disconnected series of interventions.

Reacting to this enforced passivity, the bishops seized upon the agenda's provision for smaller working groups. They formed thirty such groups, addressing different topics. But the working groups also proved unwieldy, producing reports that

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were never seen by the other groups but condensed by a drafting committee into successive drafts of what was to be the conference's final statement.

Later plenary sessions reviewed these drafts, sometimes voting on them paragraph by paragraph, sometimes rejecting entire sections. The procedure gave bishops the opportunity to object that various points from the working groups had been neglected or to submit these points in the form of written or amendments. But power still rested with the drafters, who in late-night sessions, tried to accommodate the objections. As the meeting progressed, the number of modifications submitted to the discretion of the drafting committee mounted to the thousands—some reports said well over 10,000. Meanwhile, there was never an opportunity for major contrasting positions to be openly debated by the full body and then tested by a vote. "You had a lot of people working on a quilt without understanding what the end pattern should be," said Monsignor Lynch.

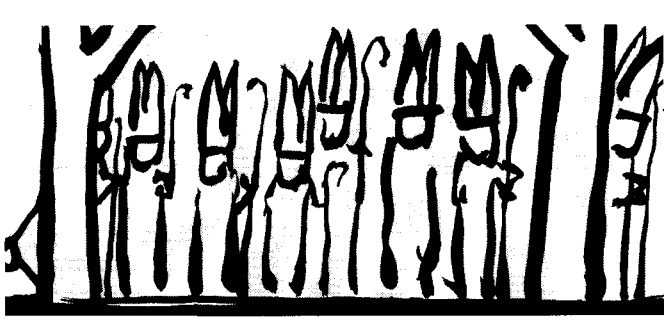
Not until the late on Monday, October 26, with a single full working day left, did the bishops see anything coming close to a definitive draft. All the remaining amendments were boiled down to a couple dozen, and on Wednesday morning the body had about twenty minutes to vote on those—without debate—before overwhelmingly approving the entire document.

The first week's lectures "were a waste of time," Archbishop José María Pires of Paraíba, Brazil, said. "It would have been much better instead to discuss the working document."

Archbishop Marcos McGrath of Panama also complained that the procedural snags "caused us to reach the final week without a document really having been developed."

Who, or what, was to blame? CELAM meetings, like synods in Rome, take place behind close doors, and the daily press conferences were windy exercises proving that there is a little Castro in almost every Latin prelate (and most journalists, too). So speculation can run unchecked. The two most common explanations for the outcome were: machinations by the Vatican and its conservative allies, and the Latin way of doing business.

By changing the rules and filling key posts, Rome had clearly kept control of the agenda and of the drafting process. The Vatican was held responsible for the four lectures and the mostly conservative men who gave them. The Vatican may have been responsible for waylaying the working document. Bishop Jorge Medina Estevez, the ardent supporter of Chile's General Pinochet, who was added, against all precedent, to share the role of secretary for the meeting with the duly elected Brazilian Bishop Raymundo Damasceno Assis, was reported to have called



the working document "done for" on the first day. But why did the other bishops accede to this fateful step of setting aside years of work in order to start over from scratch?

Likewise, the Vatican-appointed leaders also controlled the make-up of the crucial drafting committee. Still, the committee was chaired by the liberal head of the Brazilian bishops' conference, Archbishop Luciano Mendes de Almeida, who clearly enjoyed the delegates' confidence. And it was the effort to be "participatory" that fragmented the bishops' discussions into so many different working groups, effectively surrendering power to the drafting committee.

So whatever the Vatican was out to do in CELAM, it was certainly aided by the bishops' preference for consensual style over basic parliamentary procedures. Many of the bishops, in addition, have been appointed during this papacy, which has not been known for choosing men willing to risk confrontation with the Vatican.

Of course, if the object was simply to go home without upsetting any applecarts, then CELAM was a success. The bishops reaffirmed their commitment to Medellin, Puebla, and the option for the poor. The latter, many said, is now "irrevocable" as part of church teaching.

Liberation theology, by contrast, was neither affirmed nor rejected in the statement, nor did it even have much of a presence outside the meeting. Most of its leading figures stayed away from Santo Domingo. This invisibility was in part a sign of success: to some extent, liberation theology has become thoroughly absorbed into the Latin American church. On the other hand, liberation theology seems to be in a somewhat withdrawn, introspective mood, chastened by the collapse of socialist claims in Nicaragua and the outright enthusiasm for free-market mechanisms displayed in Eastern Europe by both ordinary people and intellectuals.

What about the major new developments that have overtaken Latin America since the Puebla meeting: the emergence of new but fragile democracies; the recognition that women, Indian and Afro-American populations, and aboriginal tribes are distinct subgroups of the poor demanding special attention and changes in church attitudes; the explosive growth of evangelical and Pentecostal Protestantism; the ecological issue, the external debt, and the growing rejection of statist economics for market mechanisms? Here the bishops' statements were sensitive, sound, predictable, and unexciting. Certainly they fell short of the desire to avoid a laundry list of concerns and to give the Latin American church a focused vision to guide and inspire its efforts for another decade.

"You'd find the general opinion that it is a good document," Archbishop McGrath said. "But if we'd had a few more days, it would have been much better."

Monsignor Lynch was of the same view: the bishops "had a product they can accept and work with." At the same time, he added, "if we'd had another day or so, this would have been much more interesting." PETER STEINFELS

Peter Steinfels is senior religion correspondent of the New York Times. *He was assisted in reporting this article by Gene Palumbo, a free-lance journalist based in El Salvador.*

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REPORT FROM SANTO DOMINGO—II

JOHN PAUL CRIES 'WOLF'

MISREADING THE PENTECOSTALS

As with many of his trips, John Paul II's visit to the Dominican Republic in October carried symbolic significance. Could he avoid giving tacit approval to the extravagance of President Joaquín Balaguer's monument to Columbus's discovery of the Americas? Would he ask for pardon for the colonial excesses that brought devastation to native peoples? These questions were pushed aside in the minds of many observers by the pope's pointed attack on sects and other religions.

In his opening address at the Fourth General Conference of Latin American Bishops (CELAM), the pope said the sects were like "rapacious wolves" devouring Latin American Catholics and "causing division and discord in our communities." This was a key point in a speech meant to give direction to the Latin American church for the coming decade.

Many Latin American bishops were prepared for the pope's strong language about "sects" and "pseudo-spiritual movements" by similar language that had appeared in the assembly's working document. John Paul II also stressed the danger of underestimating "a certain strategy" employing notable economic resources to crack the Catholic unity of Latin America and weaken the bonds that unify Latin American countries. This line of reasoning also frequently appears in interviews with Latin American bishops: first, Latin Americans have a Catholic soul and a Catholic culture that bind therm together; and second, some groups are spending a lot of money to attack the Catholic church in Latin America and the United States is surely behind it. Archbishop Arturo Rivera y Damas of San Salvador remarked to a reporter in El Salvador that the sects were the pay-back from the United States for progressive stands the church has taken.

But ten years of study has convinced me that there is not a strong relation between money spent and results. The great advances seen in Protestant growth in Latin America are not the result of dollars from the United States. Everett Wilson, a Pentecostal scholar with a doctorate in history from Stanford University, has been looking for a long time into charges of a North American offensive against the Catholic church. He concludes that, yes, hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent in a North American religious push into Latin America. But he concludes that this effort has borne little fruit for large growth is not typically seen in these recently arriving groups.

If great growth is not among these groups, where then? The use of the term, "*sectas,*" is itself objectionable to most evangelicals and is usually avoided by close observers of the complex non-Catholic religious world of Latin America. In particular it tends to perpetuate typical Catholic stereotypes and prejudices about non-Catholics. *Sectas* also forces global generalizations on non-Catholics, characterizations that do not fit everyone. To explain the word's usage, Professor Samuel Escobar, a scholar at Eastern Baptist Seminary, Overbrook, Pennsylvania, believes Catholic bishops use it to point to the fastest growing groups. Thus *sectas* mixes together Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons with a wide assortment of evangelical Christians, "brainwashing" cults, and New Age groups.

In fact, the greatest growth among non-Catholics in Latin America is by Pentecostals, especially indigenous groups. These differing and fragmented groups account for 75 to 90 percent of growth in non-Catholic religions in many Latin American countries. Latin American Catholics typically see Pentecostals as among the new groups, cultural imports without deep roots. But many Pentecostal Christians have long roots in Latin America, dating back to the early 1900s in Chile and Brazil, and the 1920s in other Latin American countries where they are prominent. Older Protestant groups in Latin America, Lutherans, Methodists, and Anglicans, have also tended to ignore Pentecostal history, feel rebuffed in attempts at interchurch relations with Pentecostal churches, and like Catholics have lost many members to them. The five Protestant observers at CELAM IV were all members of historical Protestant denominations and, thus, the question of why no Pentecostal observer was invited to the meeting becomes more insistent, especially when Pentecostals practiced in ecumenism were available.

Since the greatest Pentecostal growth has occurred in the last twenty years, historians and social scientists, looking more carefully into the backgrounds of these churches, are surprised by their long histories. Pentecostals had been living in different worlds, apart from mainline Protestants and Catholics. Finally, in the 1970s and '80s, several things occurred to make the Pentecostal presence felt: their numbers reached a critical mass that could not be ignored; Jimmy Swaggart (a Pentecostal) captivated large audiences on television and in soccer stadia which held 150,000 rapt attenders; many Catholics became Charismatics, cousins to Pentecostals; and previously "apolitical" Pentecostals went into public life.

One of the great figures of Latin American Pentecostalism arrived in Latin America in 1889. Willis C. Hoover served the Methodist Episcopal church in Chile. Pentecostal experiences for Hoover and his followers occurred in 1907, only six years after the beginning of the worldwide Pentecostal movement by Charles Parham in Kansas. The experience of Hoover and his followers led to a split with the Methodist church and to the founding of the Pentecostal Methodist church in Chile. This is a Chilean foundation, dates from 1909, has had Chilean leaders for decades, and is the largest non-Catholic church in the country, with hundreds of thousands of members.

Brazil, with about 20 percent evangelicals in a population of 120 million, has also been a major center of Pentecostal growth. The Brazilian Assemblies of God has attracted millions and is the largest evangelical denomination in the country. The manner by which this church began was unusually international but quickly became Brazilian. Swedish Baptists heard of Pentecostalism in Chicago and began work in Northeast Brazil in

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1911. Daniel Berg and Gunnar Vingren, founders, wished to adapt the work of the church to Brazil, recruited Brazilian pastors and teachers, and left behind them a church that never had to shed a North American image.

The depiction of sects also obscures the formal Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue that has been taking place. Since 1972, the Vatican Secretariat for Christian Unity has sponsored a series of five-year consultations with what are called Classical Pentecostals. Kilian McDonnell, a Benedictine theologian at Saint John's, Collegeville, Minnesota, has been co-chairman of the dialogue and has been encouraged by its progress.

Peter Hocken, a Catholic priest who is secretary of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, believes that the Pentecostal movement offers a model which differs from the dominant one in the ecumenical movement between Reformation churches and Catholic participants. Pentecostals have their origins after the Reformation and are part of the Holiness tradition. Hocken says that the dialogue between Catholics and Pentecostals springs especially from personal and spiritual renewal and sharing in worship and ministry. This requires of theology an interaction between theological sources and contemporary reality: a reflection on Scripture and tradition in the current situation and a reflection on the current situation in the light of Scripture and tradition. This, Hocken characterizes as a servant theology. Such theology resembles what the Latin American church does through its methodology of description of reality, reflection on Scripture and tradition, and pastoral conclusions. The main thrust of ecumenism in Latin America and its charisma for the larger church will probably not be Reformed-Catholic or Orthodox-Catholic but Spirit-oriented between Latin American Catholics and Pentecostals.

Even to counter the aggressive anti-Catholicism among Pentecostals, belligerent language may do more harm than good. McDonnell believes it closes off the possibility of Catholics learning, even from exclusionary Pentecostals. "They are better at new evangelization—ultimate challenge, decision, and conversion—than we are." In terms of the main theme of the Latin American church at Santo Domingo, evangelization, making Christ better known and followed with conviction, Pentecostals have a great lesson to teach. But no one in or around the Santo Domingo meeting cited Pentecostal vision or methods for illumination about what to do concretely in evangelization.

Why? "Since the public image of Pentecostals is not good in many Latin American circles, they can be ignored," says McDonnell. Melinda Roper, former president of the Maryknoll Sisters, observes: "In contrast to my growing up as the only Catholic among Protestants, the Latin American bishops grew up only with Catholics. To have non-Catholics around in abundant numbers is a new experience, with nothing in their background to help them deal with it. To them it does seem like violence and calls forth an instinctual need to defend."

It must be admitted that that cause has been given many times over for the strong language of the pope and the bishops. To anyone who has tried to put out of his or her house insistent visitors with religious dogmas thrown around as endless slogans, the invasion of aggressive church bodies does seem un-Latin American. But the irritation felt by many Latin American Catholics has deeper cause than importunate visitors. Many sectarian evangelicals preach an exclusionary Christianity: Catholics will not be saved; Catholics have dead faith; Catholics are the Whore of Babylon. One becomes Christian in the measure than one stops being Catholic.

The appeal of Pentecostalism can be explained in part by sociological views of the situation of many Latin Americans since World War II when massive migrations and changes in work produced "masterless" persons, men and women who had been cut loose from previous ties to families, friends, and neighborhoods and were free to form new bonds, including new religious ties. Pentecostals were there in the new neighborhoods, welcoming them, challenging previous ways of consumption (drinking, womanizing, not saving money), offering new status as persons with many roles to play in the church. And Pentecostals offered an attractive spirituality. In his address, John Paul II also offered an analysis of causes, centering on the religious ignorance of great masses of Catholics who lack pastoral attention. But he also raised a delicate issue: "But it can also happen that the faithful do not find in their pastoral ministers the strong sense of God which they should transmit by their own lives. And so many poor and simple go to the sects seeking a religious sense for life."

Note should also be taken that vigorous countermeasures by Catholics are having an effect. James Scanlon, a Maryknoll missioner in Guatemala City, recruited 200 lay people to knock on the doors of their neighborhood and developed other programs designed to bring back Catholics to regular attendance at the parish. In 1989 he welcomed back a thousand people. David Stoll, author of *Is Latin America Turning Protestant?* (University of California Press, 1990; *see* John A. Coleman's review in *Commonweal*, January 25, 1991), reported recently that in the area of his field study in the Ixil region of Guatemala three priests were drawing large crowds to Catholic churches. These and many other efforts have slowed evangelical and Pentecostal growth considerably in Central America, according to Clifton Holland who with his teams of researchers has been surveying the region for church growth or decline.

Catholics in the United States, given their experience of interactions with non-Catholics, could be bridges in a dialogue between Latin American Catholics and Pentecostals. Here Pentecostals are now the subject of serious scholarship, for example Robert Mapes Anderson's *Vision of the Disinherited* (Oxford University Press, 1979). An atmosphere of trust pervades the Society of Pentecostal Scholars and the ecumenical dialogue involving Catholics and Classical Pentecostals.

Few Latin American Catholics know the history of Pentecostalism, the national character of its churches, or the dialogue taking place between Catholics and Pentecostals. If there is one place in the world where greater understanding between Catholics and Pentecostals would benefit the work of God it is Latin America. EDWARD L. CLEARY

Edward L. Cleary, O.P., is a visiting professor at Yale University, and coauthor of Conflict and Competition: The Latin American Church in a Changing Environment *(Lynne Rienner).*

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REPORT FROM TURKEY

THE OTHER KURDISH REVOLT

ETHNIC FRACTIONALISM

In the back alleys of Cizre, a downtrodden city in Turkey's Kurdish southeast, a family of about a dozen crowds into a small concrete room. A few weeks earlier they had fled their home in nearby Sirnak after a fifty-hour battle that left their city in ruins. The Turkish military claims it was shooting at separatist Kurdish guerrillas; residents dispute this. They claim that the military, frustrated with its inability to stem rising support for the guerrillas, attacked the city without provocation.

Sirnak now stands a virtual ghost town: buildings are pockmarked with bullet holes, shattered glass litters the streets, most of the 29,000 residents are gone. And the refugee family, like dozens of others interviewed during my visit to the region last September, is fearful and angry.

"Maybe we will go to the guerrillas," says one young man crouched on the bare concrete floor. As his brothers nod their heads in approval he adds, "There, everything is good. In the mountains the fighting is one-on-one. You see what happens to us when we have no weapons."

Since 1984, the Turkish military and the Kurdistan Workers party (PKK) have been fighting for control of southeast Turkey, a desolate mountainous region that is home to about half the country's estimated 10 to 12 million Kurds. Over 5,000 people have died in the fighting—about one-third of them in 1992 alone—and every day brings reports of a new skirmish.

As the fighting grows, so do reports of human rights abuses against the local civilian population. These range from forced evacuation of villages to torture of detainees and shootings which, as in Sirnak, seem targeted at civilians as much as at guerrillas. At least seventy well-known Kurdish activists, including eight journalists, have been murdered over the past two years by a shadowy group commonly referred to as the "contra-guerrillas." The activists say the group is backed by the security forces, but Turkish officials deny this.

"It's an illusion of the state that by oppressing people they will be able to suppress [Kurdish nationalism]," says a twenty-nine-year-old Kurdish journalist, who claims he was picked up and tortured for almost two weeks last July after police accused him of working for the PKK. "Maybe in the short run people will be scared, but then they will join the guerrillas, because that's the only way they will feel safe and strong," explains the man, who writes for a pro-Kurdish newspaper, which has seen four of its correspondents mysteriously murdered this year while another was shot and left paralyzed.

The current battle in southeast Turkey takes place against decades of official repression of Kurdish national and cultural identity in which use of the Kurdish language, music, and even names were widely restricted. Kurdish uprisings following national independence in 1923 only encouraged Turkey's desire to assimilate the Kurds and repress their ethnic identity. In the republic's early years, hundreds of thousands of Kurds were relocated to western parts of the country. But suppression has never worked.

In the late 1980s, the government took steps to stem growing support for the PKK, a Marxist-Leninist group. Political leaders and others stopped calling the Kurds "mountain Turks," the government's euphemism; and vague promises were made about increasing investment in the economically depressed southeast. In April 1991, an eight-year-old ban against the Kurdish language was lifted, and the security forces became noticeably more relaxed about permitting the sale of Kurdish music cassettes and pro-Kurdish publications.

In this atmosphere of new tolerance two dozen nationalist Kurds campaigned for parliament in the elections scheduled for the fall of 1991. When their party was disqualified by a technicality, they were invited to run as part of the Social Democratic Populist party (SHP), whose leader, Erdal Inonu, was eager to regain Kurdish support. Many Kurds mistrusted him after he ousted seven Kurdish deputies from the SHP a few years earlier for attending a Kurdish conference in Paris.

The elections produced a coalition government headed by conservative True Path party leader Suleyman Demirel, whose party came in first but fell short of a parliamentary majority. Demirel joined forces with Inonu, making it seem as if the Kurdish situation in the southeast would be addressed at last.

"It was a most strange union," says Ragip Zarakolu, an Istanbul publisher. "The new coalition prepared a democratic program, both [leaders] visited [the southeast] and said they would solve the problem without terror." But after a few months, it became clear that changes would come slowly or not at all. Zarakolu, who also writes a column for one of the pro-Kurdish newspapers, says the new government quickly discovered it was much easier to govern with the authoritarian restrictions dating back to the 1980-83 military regime and lost interest in the promised reforms.

Certainly, the government has fulfilled few of its campaign promises concerning human rights. A judicial reform bill aimed at ending torture by shortening the detention period and ensuring detainees access to a lawyer fell apart after conservative members of Demirel's party opposed applying the changes to the war-torn southeast. Constitutional reform plans neatly ignore the military-enacted restrictions on the press and universities, among other things. Prime Minister Demirel no longer seems to want to lift emergency rule or disband the government-financed village guards system, two things Kurdish activists say are necessary to defuse tension in the region.

Meanwhile, the Kurdish deputies find they are booed and even physically threatened in the legislature when they try to speak about cultural recognition and autonomy. Eighteen of the deputies have resigned from Inonu's party to protest his inaction. They may soon be forced to resign from parliament. A move is under way to strip the deputies of their parliamentary immunity so they can be charged with sedition for statements

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in support of Kurdish rights. The deputies' party, the People's Labor party, may be disbanded under a vague law banning actions aimed at "changing the characteristic of the republic."

The situation in the parliament has further isolated many Kurds from the state. They also feel cheated by an international community that applauds Turkey for supporting the Iraqi Kurdish "safe-haven" in northern Iraq, but does not comment on Turkey's repression of its own Kurdish population. Meanwhile even the Iraqi Kurds, desperate to maintain good relations with Turkey, have turned against the PKK, trying to drive them out with the aid of the Turkish military, which recently sent planes and ground forces to back up their attack.

The Turkish Kurds, stateless and seemingly friendless, have little choice but to turn toward the PKK, a move which may be more out of necessity than any true love for Marxism-Leninism, which has also killed Kurdish civilians. Regardless, continuing government action—or inaction—will only further radicalize a population exhausted from having its identity repressed and its human rights abused.

In the narrow back-alleys of Cizre, where refugees from Sirnak are gathered, I ask a twenty-nine-year-old man what sort of work he did before fleeing Sirnak. "I never could find a job," he says, a bit abashed. A few minutes later, perhaps worried this could be misinterpreted, he adds, "But it's not work that we want, we want freedom. We don't care about bread, about food; we care about independence, freedom, and security." ALIZA MARCUS

Aliza Marcus is a New York-based journalist who frequently writes about Turkey.

REPORT FROM THE PEW

RELIGION & POLITICS
HOW NOT TO MIX THEM

For most of my professional and ministerial life I have argued that religion and politics are not separate, sharply divided spheres. Indeed, I have claimed that there ought to be an intimate connection between one's faith and one's political commitments. Especially in the Catholic church, which holds fast the notion that humans are social beings and which places that conviction at the center of its life in the Eucharist, the Body of Christ.

But sometimes I wonder. One such time occurred on a weekend in mid-September in the Maryland suburbs of Washington.

I had attended a meeting in Washington on Saturday and spent that night with my son. We attended Mass on Sunday in his new parish. The bulletin carried letters from the pastor and from Cardinal James Hickey about the Maryland abortion referendum on the November ballot. The referendum, Question 6, involved ratification of the prochoice legislation passed by the Maryland legislature earlier this year.

Both letters urged Maryland Catholics to inform themselves on the legislation, to contribute to the "Vote kNOw" coalition, and to vote prolife. Taking this political stance is not, from my perspective, objectionable. The church teaches the sacred value of life and has long been active in prolife politics.

What caused me to pause, and then to become angry, was what happened (and what didn't happen) during Mass itself. The liturgy proceeded as normal up to and through the Gospel reading. But, instead of a homily, the deacon informed the congregation that Cardinal Hickey had directed that his letter be read at all Masses in the archdiocese. He then read the letter without comment and introduced us to the woman who chaired the parish's prolife committee. She read a prepared text that drily instructed the congregation on filling out donation cards for the "Vote kNOw" coalition. This was done in a way that could only be compared to reading instructions for bicycle assembly. Finally, the donations were collected, and Mass resumed.

What is wrong with this picture?

The *manner* in which the parish dealt with the abortion referendum communicated a radical *disconnection* between religion and politics. The cardinal's letter and the referendum donations were inserted into the Mass as though from another planet. The Mass is, the procedure told us, religion. The abortion referendum is something else. Important enough to interrupt Mass for, but not part of our worship.

This manner of treating religion and politics communicates precisely the wrong message to Catholics. No reference whatsoever was made to the abortion referendum apart from the letter and the donations, and the letter and the donation appeal made no reference to what had happened in the Scripture readings and what would happen at the altar.

So much could have been done to demonstrate the linkage. The Gospel reading for that Sunday was the parable of the prodigal son. The deacon or pastor could have preached briefly on that story, relating it to the referendum. Abortion represents estrangement in our society, as well as in our church. It divides mothers and fathers from their children; divides prolife from prochoice Americans; divides the church. There surely were many in the congregation that Sunday who disagreed with the cardinal's action against the referendum; many did not want to make a contribution to the effort; almost certainly there were some in attendance who had had abortions themselves or had loved ones who had.

The story of the prodigal son presented the opportunity to acknowledge these divisions and pains and to present Christ's reconciliation and healing, especially for those who have experienced the personal tragedy of abortion. The preaching and the liturgy could have spoken of the reasons why the church takes political stands on serious moral questions, despite disagreement and division, just as the father in Luke's Gospel rejoiced at the return of his lost son, despite risking the alienation of the older brother.

In short, the parish fumbled a splendid opportunity to witness how political commitments are legitimate and necessary *when they grow organically from the church's worship and belief.* When they are dropped in from outside (even if that outside is the chancery office), they jar and disconcert. They sug-

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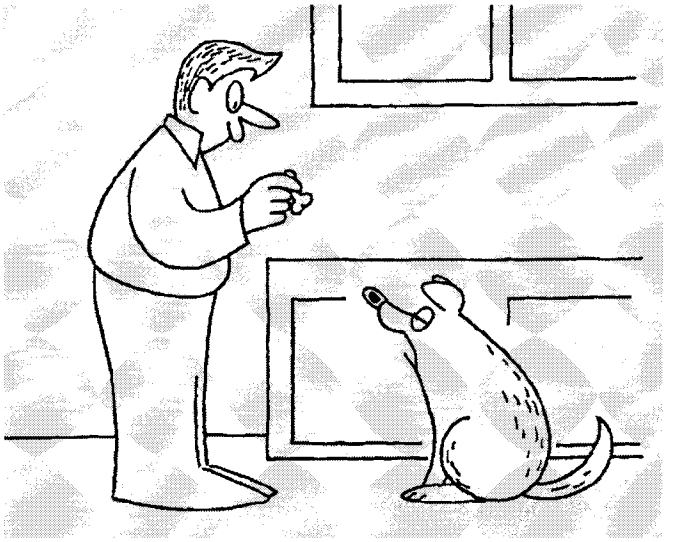
gest that *real religion* is the "normal" liturgy; everything else a (regrettably necessary) distraction. The manner of treating the abortion referendum insinuated that the brokenness reflected in political and social conflict is not enfleshed in the bread broken at the eucharistic table. The message, in effect, was, "We'll get the politics done as quickly and dispassionately as possible, so we can get on with the real reason for our Sunday gathering."

Perhaps my judgments about this particular Sunday have been too harsh. Perhaps the ground for this appeal had been laid properly on other Sundays. Even so, with barely 50 percent of Catholics at Mass on a given weekend, the connection between religion and politics may never be taken for granted, even (indeed especially) with abortion.

Too often church leaders forget that associations that seem natural and obvious to them are not so for all Catholics. We forget the tension and ambiguity with which the ordinary Catholic lives. We forget to communicate the relatedness of things. Why particular Catholics are in the pew on a given Sunday may not have much to do with why we think they should be there. Therefore, bishops and pastors who take political stands must labor to unite them to the concerns of the larger church, as experienced in the eucharistic celebration, which ought to manifest and create the world's deepest connectedness.

The approach I advocate is not without danger. Instead of political commitment flowing from worship, political ideology may capture liturgy. We may come to celebrate a Christ generated from political faith, rather than the other way round. Such risk, however, must be accepted as elemental to the tension of the Kingdom of God among us, not yet fully realized.



"We're talking about begging here, aren't we?"

CLARKE E. COCHRAN

Clarke E. Cochran is professor and director of graduate studies in political science at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas. He is also a permanent deacon. His book Religion in Public and Private Life *was published by Routledge in 1990.*

OF SEVERAL MINDS John Garvey

MISSING THE POINT

THE ECONOMY OF SALVATION, STUPID

Take two sorts of Christian: one is a believer in the kind of theology that affirms people, a theology that says to any group you can think of—racial minorities, the oppressed, homosexual men and women—that they should understand themselves as good, as all right, as people who should fight for their own rights and, by extension, the rights of others. It celebrates the community that is formed in this struggle.

Another sort of Christian finds joy in belonging to an ancient tradition, handed on from the age of the apostles; it becomes fulfilled for him in liturgy beautifully celebrated, and he sees everything as beginning and ending in this eucharistic fullness. For this sort of Christian, the community is found in those who share this faith, and the world of dailiness is something of a distraction from the much deeper reality to be found in the Eucharist.

These two sorts of Christians would seem to be at odds. In fact, these admittedly oversimplified sketches seem to be descriptive of (for example) the liberal Protestant or Catholic on the one hand, and the Orthodox Christian or traditionalist Catholic on the other.

Both Christians find their faith assuring in very different ways, but they have this in common: faith is, for them, an affirming thing, something deeply assuring, something that fulfills them. They love particular visions of the church, and find those visions satisfying. This is not to accuse them of self-satisfaction or smugness; these visions of the beloved church can be accompanied by a strong sense of one's own shortcomings, one's sinfulness, the radical *lacking* that every serious Christian must confront.

The similarities in these points of view are, anyway, more impressive to me than the differences, because it seems to me that what makes both views most similar is what makes them both wrong.

Our relationship to God is not meant to assure or affirm us or satisfy us, nor is our participation in the Eucharist the whole point of our being Christian. The Eucharist is food for the journey, a taste of the bread of tomorrow—a tomorrow which has not yet come, and will never come on our terms.

While we can be aware of our own sinfulness, we can at the same time be satisfied with an experience of church, a vision, a kind of esthetic. The temptation is to rest there, to be consoled. This temptation (whether it takes a "progressive" or "traditionalist" form) must be resisted. Seen

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in the light of church history, it doesn't work.

At its dawn, Christianity affirmed none of the forms of paganism or Judaism present at the time. It is true that some aspects of—for example—the morality of Hillel were affirmed; Jesus did not take anything like an antinomian approach to the Law. At the same time, there is no evidence that he supported the liberation movement of his age, the anti-Roman zealots; neither did he support the establishment. Neither revolution against social injustice nor the continuing power of the religious and political establishment mattered, in the face of the Kingdom. The repentance called for, the transformation he called for from his followers (and from us), placed all members of the community before the presence and judgment of the living God, just as the prophets did.

The traditionalist loves to appeal to the calm of an unbroken and unchangeable approach to the apostolic faith, but it never existed. To take only one rather important instance, it was not until the fourth century that the Holy Spirit was explicably said to be God, by Saint Gregory Nazianzen. This was certainly accepted implicitly by Christians, but if you'll look closely at the structure of the Nicene Creed you will see that the Holy Spirit is not affirmed there to be one with the Father (as Christ is). Now we see this as "obvious" (as if any of these mysteries could be), because why else would the Spirit be "worshiped and glorified" with the Father and the Son?

There was, however, a reluctance to affirm this too glibly. In a similar way, the affirmation of Jesus' divinity was not made explicit because of some devotional fervor, but was brought about by a denial of that divinity. Part of this silence about matters we would consider essential was an appropriate reluctance to seem to move in any way from the strict monotheism that affirmed the Father as the source of everything. Christian trinitarian teaching is, of course, in fact monotheistic, but showing this to be the case is far from simple, and this language was the result of a difficult, intense, and often unpleasant struggle.

This formation of dogmatic language, and insisting upon its appropriateness, was never the *point* of the church. It was a necessity forced upon it. Traditionalists too often act as if the articulated results of this struggle were the reason for Christianity's existence, rather than a byproduct of something more important.

Where many of the progressive/conservative struggles seem to me to miss the point is in looking too much at the church as a structure for which we are responsible; this is a mistake both sides make. Such questions as the place of women in the church—probably the most important single issue the church faces—lead the progressives to bring structural and largely political arguments to the arena (invoking images of empowerment, second-class citizenship, etc.). Conservatives rest on history: it was not ever done this way in the past, and therefore it cannot be done now. They reduce the arguments of their opponents, making it seem as if the question were only a passing fad.

Neither of these responses is adequate, and my point here is not to argue this particular issue. But notice: both sides act as if the church were primarily a structure whose shape must be changed, or maintained, by its members as a proper vehicle for the message of the gospel. The idea of an assembly confronted by the living God of Sinai and Calvary seems absent, or nearly so. The church could "solve" this question in either direction and still be massively irrelevant. It can be correct in either direction, and absolutely betray its mission. The church is not a political body which is, among other things, about the Cross, or the fact that Christ will come again.

In Mark's account of the Transfiguration, Peter—confronted with the radiance of Christ standing with the Prophet Elijah and Moses, the Lawgiver—babbles foolishly, offering to build booths for all three. It is an irrelevant and obviously inadequate response to something that was plainly terrifying. "He did not know what to say," Mark tells us, "for they were exceedingly afraid." But Peter's response at least came from fear before the face of the divine, whereas our arguments, God help us, seem to take the divine for granted: We know all that, we say; now let's get on to *really* important subjects, like who has power. It is essential for all Christians of whatever orientation—progressive, conservative, liberal, radical, or reactionary—to understand that if Peter's words were irrelevant, his fear was not. □

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THE MALE AGONY

ACCORDING TO WALTER J. ONG

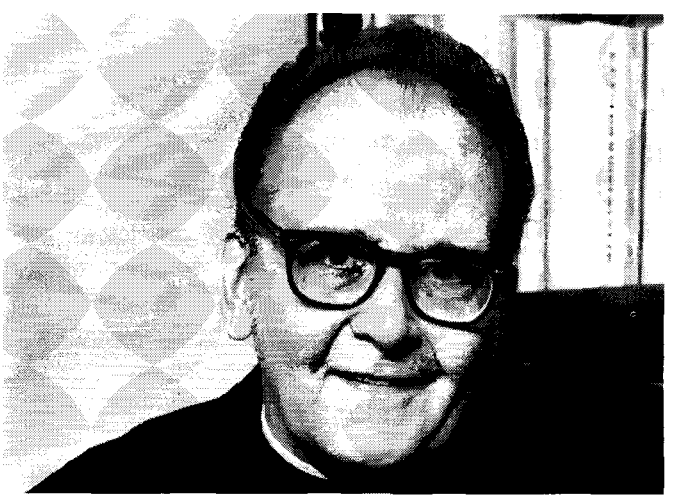
DAVID TOOLAN

Walter J. Ong, S.J., is a genial polymath. Where others stay within their fields, Ong cuts across them, taking cues from anthropology, sociology, biology, psychology, literary and intellectual history, and Christian ecclesial and theological history. He refers to himself, not as a relativist, but as a "relationist"—as in E.M. Forster's injunction, "only connect." His students at Saint Louis University affectionately call him "The Great Walter Ong." Yet at age eighty, Ong doesn't have the name recognition that his late Jesuit compeers John Courtney Murray and Teilhard de Chardin enjoy. Ong's seminal thinking on the effect of writing and the printing press on human consciousness is just beginning to bear fruit in church history and biblical studies. Otherwise, he is probably better known outside Catholic circles—among intellectual historians, literary critics, linguists, and folklorists—than he is within his own household.

Ong invariably surprises his readers by making connections, and intimate ones at that, between seemingly unrelated phenomena. For instance, have you ever considered the parallels between the adversarial method of Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae* and the sparring rites of male fig wasps or oryx antelope? Probably not. Well, Walter Ong has.

One minute, Ong is describing how Western intellectual life, from Aristotelian logic to modern jurisprudence, grew out of reflection on verbal combat, and the next he is illustrating the point in terms of animal behavior, Clifford Geertz's descriptions of Balinese cockfights, or "land diving" from atop trees in the New Hebrides islands. And before you know it, you may get a disquisition on how such masculine rites of display relate to the stylized tongue-lashing of inner-city African-Americans and rap music, the sexual politics of the Catholic church, or the "us versus them" rhetoric of Patrick J. Buchanan, Fidel Castro, and Saddam Hussein.

Indeed, as a close student of the subterranean politics of the Renaissance humanist tradition, Ong has understood better than most the subtle links between social hierarchy, gender roles, and sexual identity. Pat Buchanan and Fidel Castro, he will typically note, were educated in the disputatious atmosphere of all-male Jesuit high schools when Latin was still the centerpiece. Why was Latin retained? Well, because Latin pedagogy was part of boot camp. "The Roman Catholic church," Ong writes, "clung longest of any group in the West to Learned Latin, the extrafamilial, sex-linked, distinctively male language that carried with it the old agonistic mind-set and thought forms" of an oral culture. Latin drill outlived its utilitarian medieval and Renaissance function of initiating young men into the elite language of the governing class in church, state, and academia precisely because, as a "toughener" complete with customary flogging, it possessed all the marks of a male puberty rite in so-called primitive societies. The object was to define the boy over-against the "soft" world of women in order to "make a man of him."



Two volumes of Ong's collected essays on religion and culture, *Faith and Contexts*, (vol. 1, *Selected Essays and Studies, 1952-1991*; vol. 2, *Supplementary Studies, 1946-1989*) have been published to honor him on his eightieth birthday (Scholar's Press, $149.95 for the set; $74.95 each volume). D.T.

DAVID TOOLAN, S.J., *is associate editor of* America *magazine and director of the Catholic Book Club.*

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Poet Robert Bly has been reminding us lately of what men deprived of such ordeals of manhood lose. What Bly overlooks but Ong sees is that such strenuous initiation rites also function to fortify the gender hierarchy—and consequently, with the collapse of these tests, not only are the rules for establishing male identity eroded, but the legitimacy of the hierarchical order founded on gender discrimination also comes apart. It is no wonder, then, that pyramidal models of church organization totter. Further, inasmuch as church teaching is, as Ong says, "permanently structured in deep masculine-feminine polarities that shift dialectically through time," dogma itself becomes unsettled. Frightening?

Ong is not frightened; he is one of the most unnostalgic of men—because in his understanding, only the spirit, not the letter, gives life. For him, the Christian church "is not a body of doctrine or an 'institution' but a community with a shared memory."

The question is, how did Ong move from studies of the contrast between oral cultures and literate ones to gender issues? From studies of a little-known sixteenth-century humanist to the issues of social hierarchies? And from these issues to a consideration of the biological substructure of the doctrines of the church, redemption, and God? The path is circuitous, but worth following—especially in an era of feminist criticism.

The Letter Kills

If there is a common theme running through Ong's scholarly work, it is the variety of ways consciousness has been reshaped at first by the invention of writing, then by the printing press, and finally by television, stereos, and computers. Ong's point is not just that the medium affects the content of the message, as his teacher Marshall McLuhan claimed, but that in framing and storing ideas in certain ways, technology restructures the whole mental universe of communicators and receivers. Electronic channels of expression and transmission, he maintains, are even now inducing a "secondary orality,"—and restructuring our psyches and norms, creating the "global village" of instant telecommunication, undermining the artificial securities of typography, and making thinkable the kind of national "electronic town meeting" referenda proposed by Ross Perot to get around the gridlock between the White House and Congress. Long ago, the Greek alphabet shook up a hierarchical social system in a similar way.

With Perry Miller as his mentor at Harvard, Ong first made his academic reputation as a preeminent Renaissance scholar by driving home the limitations of being "lettered." His favorite aphorism, that "The letter kills, it is only the spirit that gives life" (2 Cor. 3:6)—which he glosses to mean that books are no substitute for the interaction of speakers who always say more than they mean, and mean more than they can say—takes its force from his study of its opposite in the person of Peter Ramus, a sixteenth-century logician and pedagogue. In 1958, Ong published two weighty volumes on this subject, and the title of one of these books, *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue* (Harvard University Press, 1958), nearly says it all (except for the words of advice cited on the frontispiece from a contemporary of Ramus's, to a disciple: "Young man, listen to me: You will never be a great man if you think that Ramus is a great man"). In brief, Ong's study of Ramus revealed the programmed contentiousness in the intellectual life of Renaissance and medieval academic circles that arose out of the high-stress ethos of the still largely oral and male-dominant culture. Like Plato's Socrates before them, these academics employed verbal duels to get at the truth, much as adversarial procedure in a modern courtroom is used to get at the "facts."

In contrast, Ramus wanted to eclipse oral discourse. He used the new print technology of the time to write the perfect textbook and thus eliminate the ambiguity and surplus of meaning that always elicits a "comeback" in oral exchange. As Ong puts it, the mentality of the printed book "encourages a sense of closure, a sense that what is found in the text has been finalized, has reached a state of completion" (*Orality and Literacy, see* box). Once an untruth has been cast in lead type, it seemingly lasts forever. That's why, according to Ong, books are burned!

Subsequently imitated throughout the learned world (and notably in theology), Ramus's rationalistic mindset and pedagogy became normative throughout the West, contributing to the bad smell "dogma" has had ever since. As Ong points out, however, the psychological distance fostered by print technology would eventually itself undo such fixity, as demonstrated by the critical turn of the Enlightenment and the "hermeneutics of suspicion" that came with Marx, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Freud. In the same vein, moreover, it is this psychological distance that would lead Ong to "see through" Ramus and other humanists of his era, perceiving them as contestants in a male game of one-upmanship or face-off. For as Ong explains in his later book, *Fighting for Life* (Cornell University Press, 1981), in order for a man to define his own identity, he "must face the threat of masculinity within himself by facing it in others like himself." In short, a man cannot do without his proper adversary. Such adversativeness, Ong argues, has been hugely constructive in Western intellectual life.

Orality vs. Literacy

Ong followed his Ramus enterprise with a trilogy of more popular works that provide a kind of cost-benefit analysis of the history of consciousness from the perspective of orality and literacy—*The Presence of the Word*; *Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology*; and *Interfaces of the Word* (*see* box).

I was first drawn to Ong's trilogy after spending a summer in India in 1975. It had been my first extended visit to a largely oral culture (read third world)—where, as Lucien Lévy-Bruhl once noted, people "see with eyes like ours, but they do not perceive with the same minds." The shock had been immense, and I was trying to figure out why I had been both fascinated and repulsed. The atmosphere, particularly in the villages, had seemed overwhelmingly, mysteriously maternal, and devouring. (Indira Gandhi, standing in for the Great Mother, had de-

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clared martial law days after I arrived.) At the same time, male misogyny ran rampant. The most popular film that summer featured a Hindu Lizzie Borden slaughtering her abusive husband and tyrannical mother-in-law. I was seasick. Why did I feel like a visitor from another planet—with the soul of a Jew?

Reading Walter Ong afterwards provided some answers. Of course literacy and orality feed off of each other, and the distinct mentalities fostered by each interpenetrate. But Ong helped me understand both what it means to have the "dry" soul of a literate Westerner and what it meant to live with Homer's "winged words" before they were transferred to textual space. Oral cultures have no books or libraries for "backward scanning." Theirs is an utterly fugitive world, tenuously held together by the human voice, by hearing rather than, as with us, by seeing. For a taste of it, you might read the novels of Chinua Achebe, the Nigeria writer, or visit the "third world" in your own illiterate inner city. What India desperately needed, I finally concluded, was to cool down with a mass literacy campaign, though that would bring losses.

It made a huge difference, I began to realize, that I belonged to a "people of the Book" and was the heir to Gutenberg.

Before reading Ong, it had never occurred to me that writing is a technology, depending on tools: styli, brushes, or pens, carefully prepared surfaces, inks or paints—and how much such apparently artificial, external aids had transformed our consciousness of the way the world is. We literates have so interiorized the medium of writing that we take the potentials it gave rise to for granted. But they can't be. The ability to lift myself above impulse, to reflect, to immobilize "things" out of their context in the rushing human life-world, and then analyze them in terms of causal sequence, is largely (though not exclusively) the product of the artifice of writing. For it is writing that removes one from that holistic life-world and "freezes" it, breaks it up, linearizes it on the surface of a page—and shapes our thought forms accordingly. "By separating the knower from the known," writes Ong, "writing makes possible increasingly articulate introspectivity, opening the psyche as never before not only to the external objective world quite distinct from itself but also the interior self against whom the objective world is set. Writing makes possible the introspective religious traditions such as Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam" (*Orality and Literacy*).

Fine. But we fail to advert to the fact that literacy also constitutes a major component of both first-world power and spiritual emptiness. For we forget literacy's distortions: how the textualization of existential reality renders the poetry of life prosaic, and turns the radical becoming of an oral world into static being, conveying a sense of false security. Yes, the transformation had advantages: Above all, it meant that I was inner-directed, an agent-subject, not an object of history. It meant deliverance from peasant fatalism, freedom (and corresponding guilt) such as the oral personality does not have. All this "lettered" detachment, however, also meant a proneness to what T.S. Eliot called a "dissociated sensibility," to tense inner conflicts, and a diminution of a sense of dwelling in sacred space—in short, secularization. For as Ong is fond of pointing out, the visual dominance heightened by a print-oriented culture focuses attention on visual surfaces—and it's a short jump from that to Immanuel Kant's Enlightenment dictum that we only know superficial "phenomena," not numinous depths and heights. The letter gives us leverage; it also kills. To say "I see your point" somehow does not strike as deep as to say "I hear you."

Peasant Hindus are in touch with numinous depths, and Ong helped me understand why I felt closer to the world of the Bible in India than if I had been in modern, literate Jerusalem. Oral people synthesize the world through the ear, not by sight as we do. Consequently, they know nothing of our neutral, Newtonian space. Their space is acoustic, wrap-around, invariably somewhat animistic, filled with vocal presences. Hearing attunes them to mystery, to the sacred. Sound, furthermore, is fundamentally centering; it surrounds and enfolds, establishing the oral-audial person at the core of sensation and existence—and hence the seemingly innate religiosity of such cultures remarked upon by Mircea Eliade. As Ong puts it, the oral personality "finds himself in a kind of vast interiority" (*The Presence of the Word*). You can see it in faces and carriage—these people walk in holy space. Yet it's often a dreamlike space, as if they were still in the womb of the Great Mother, wrestling to be born in another kind of time zone.

Over centuries, the detached habits of literacy, Ong insists, have pacified our world. In contrast, and to an extent our cool, tolerant times can hardly imagine, oral identities (especially male identities) depend on intense interpersonal struggle. Or, as Ong phrases it, oral cultures are marked by the "agonistic" or "adversative" tone (think of tribal Israel or her cantankerous prophets). And the Hindu caste system, still vigorous though outlawed, is a product of such adversativeness and the games of male bonding and dominance that go with it. All legitimized by religion.

The catch is that oral peoples, as Heraclitus once said, are "wet" souls. Having little inwardly ordered imaginal life that goes with literacy, they are subject to diffuse excitement, and readily go berserk (except in cultures like China's where open

The Presence of the Word (Yale University Press, 1967), *Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology* (Cornell University Press, 1971), and *Interfaces of the Word* (Cornell University Press, 1977) focus on the difference between oral cultures and literate ones, tracing the impact of writing, print, and electronic media on human character, ways of thinking, social structures, and behavior. A fourth book, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (Methuen, 1982), synthesizes the trilogy and, in addition, develops the implications of the orality-literacy contrast for structuralism, deconstruction, speech-act and reader-response theory, social studies, biblical studies, philosophy, and cultural history generally. In between the above works, I count some eleven other books on such diverse topics as language, Gerard Manley Hopkins, John Milton, Charles Darwin, popular culture, and religion. D.T.

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antagonism is repressed). Precisely like figures out of the *Iliad*, they often go in pursuit of a scapegoat for some real or imagined slight to their "good face" or honor. India, like other largely oral cultures, is full of vengeful Hatfields and McCoys. For, unlike the literate person who may react to anxiety by withdrawal, the oral personality usually takes his anxieties into the marketplace. As Ong puts it, "the individual is psychologically faced outward, he is 'tribal' man, and, under duress, he directs his anxieties and hostilities outward toward the material world around him and chiefly...to his fellow man" (*The Presence of the Word*).

More likely in great mothering India, however, the "fellow woman" is the target. For in almost all oral cultures, as the constraints of a rigidly hierarchical and conserving society break down under the democratizing impact of literacy, one finds men reacting to adversity with either passive aggression or the violence of out-of-control machismo. The latter simply repeat the excesses of a whole train of classic Greek heroes gone berserk in their rage to separate from Mother-Right. Once again, Ariadne is abandoned, Cassandra ravaged, and the altar of Athena is reviled—but with different names and places. The Hindu Lizzie Bordens are justifiably angry.

Insecurity & Male Power Games

Walter Ong's most surprising book is undoubtedly *Fighting for Life: Contest, Sexuality, and Consciousness* (*see* above), which integrates the sociobiological work of Edward O. Wilson into Ong's own studies of the high-stress, agonistic tone of oral cultures and its endurance even in literate cultures like our own. Here, Ong aimed to understand the force with which male "contest" functions to shape our cognitive worlds in politics, sports, commerce, jurisprudence, academic knowledge, and ecclesiology. The book underscores how much, historically, the rise of human consciousness, up until the appearance of the modern novel, is mainly a masculine story—that is, of men fighting for a life of their own. It is a thesis that comes close to (but does not fully endorse) Camille Paglia's argument in *Sexual Personae* (Yale University Press, 1990) that males are the main creators of culture. At any rate, Ong might add—so far.

Drawn from the Old French legal term *conteste*, implying a fair witness to an altercation, Ong intends the term contest to refer "to action based on deliberation and reason, not to violent physical action." As Ong uses the term, then, contest is William James's "moral equivalent of war"—a sublimation of aggression that has been enormously constructive in history. It is a struggle, usually between males, that is "entered into to determine dominance." Ritual contest, argues Ong, affects human life "from its biological base to its intellectual heights," and so long as we remain sexually polarized beings, this will be so. The book sharpens the issues underlying our current gender wars, including the issues behind women's ordination in the Catholic church, better than any other I know.

The roots of contest, Ong argues, go deeper than consciousness, to the "asymmetrical opposition" between the sexes buried in our evolutionary past. (Feminists will be glad to note that for Ong the male-female relationship is one of contraries, not complementarity.) The feral names of sports teams and the "killer" argot of Wall Street are no accident. For whether it occurs in the "games" of athletics, business, the courts, space races, or politics, the face-offs of men bear striking resemblance to the kind of thing studied by Konrad Lorenz: the (usually) nonlethal territorial battles that conspecific males engage in throughout the animal kingdom. (Thus the analogy between Aquinas's combative style and the behavior of wasps and antelope bucks.)

The agonistic pattern, argues Ong, is rooted in the male's basic insecurity, an insecurity stemming from the fact that masculine identity is acutely problematic, a burden and a task in a way that a female's identity is not. From the outset in the embryo, a male fetus must secrete combative androgens to offset maternal hormones that do a female no harm. The male's contrary restlessness is thus built in. And the pattern of differentiation or resistance to the environment, a certain over-againstness, continues throughout life. For, after an initial stage of identification with the mother's body, the male secures his masculine identity by growing away from the feminine; he must separate, test himself against others like himself, prove himself a man by seeking out stress—without, of course, ever breaking the bond with the feminine sources of his confidence (his mother, lovers, muse) without whom he is lost. (Ong cites the case of Albert Camus's inert, passive-aggressive Meursault in *The Stranger* as a prime example of the weakness that results from severing the bond to the feminine.) It's fatal, says Ong, if there's not a bit of Don Quixote's impossible dream, or of a daredevil Evel Knievel, in every man. And also fatal if nature and women are seen as proper adversaries.

Above all, then, masculinity stands for differentiation and change-agency. The standard male symbol, the spear of Mars, ♂, catches the drift of all the sociobiological evidence Ong marshals on this point, signifying outward movement: conflict, courting risk, dissection, division, altering the environment. Males break up the field; they have a proclivity to analyze, to be quixotic loners, to bond with other males against whom they can measure themselves as truly "not women." Male antifeminism, therefore, is rooted in the fear of being absorbed into the other sex. In contrast the woman's sexual identity crisis is brought on, Ong maintains, by the abiding crisis of the male whose identity is always being earned. Men seem to know, in their bones, that they are the "expendable sex" and that, as one of Ong's authorities phrases it, "Nature's first impulse is to create a woman." So—mistakenly—men go against nature, or against women, when the worthy adversary is another man.

The epithet, "weaker sex," Ong insists, illustrates nothing so much as male defensiveness. The opposite is true: *das ewige Weib* (the "eternal feminine") outweighs and outperforms the male in holding society together. As the Chinese proverb has it, "the female always overcomes because of her quietness." The woman's symbol of Venus's mirror, ♀, suggests self-pos-

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session, gazing at oneself as projected into the outside world and reflected back from there. The sense of being at-one with Mother Nature, indeed, of somehow representing the domain of the unconscious, goes deep in women, Ong claims, and accordingly the present concern for holism and for preserving the environment are women's inputs. Unlike a man, a woman doesn't have to "fight it" as a man does; her program, as Ong puts it, is: "I want to be me, to realize what is in me," as opposed to the male's "I want an adversary to keep at bay so as to give me confidence in what I can do." Male insecurity, seeking the stress situation, and the quest for dominance, these three, Ong insists, are functions of one another.

The point is not that women cannot be aggressive, competitive, take on male roles, even cross-dress. On the contrary, Ong is at pains to assert that women, being able to generate a male child out of themselves, know men better than men know themselves, and thus can readily take on heroic male qualities without any threat to their feminine identity. The problem is that males have no corresponding ability to assimilate the feminine without the fear of being swamped by it.

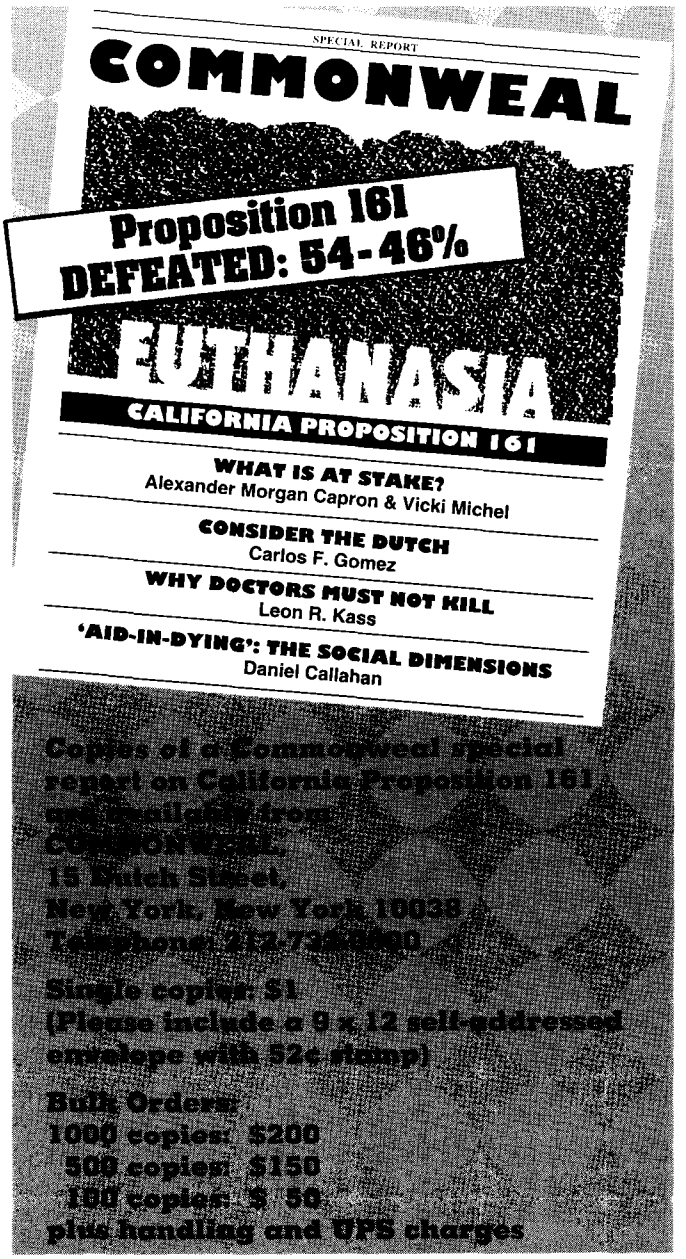
The Big Question: Women's Ordination

That the foregoing reflection is pertinent to current gender debates within the Catholic church is obvious. "The development of the Roman Catholic ethos, as of consciousness generally over the past three millennia," writes Ong, "has been that of a strongly masculinizing era, marked by agonistic patterns." The Bible, from its earliest books through Revelation, repeatedly depicts human life as a struggle, usually by male against male. God is primarily conceived of as "Father," Jesus as the male who makes the big difference, and the church is feminine. Catholicism, as Ong says, is "structured in deep masculine-feminine polarities." The question is whether the church can just slough off its masculine, adversative element as a relic of a bygone era, adopt inclusive God-language, and ordain women.

Ong does not directly commit himself on this question, but his work clarifies what is at stake. The question in his mind is this: "How much masculinization can the gospel tolerate? How much feminization?" No one doubts that we are passing, or have already passed, into a more irenic era of feminine ascendancy and ecological concern, and Ong welcomes the change. The fact that Vatican II eschewed anathemas and polemics, says Ong, is sign enough that the church is adapting to the new spirit. A further sign is given by accenting the Eucharist as a nurturing sacred meal rather than an agonistic sacrifice. But the shift will not serve us well, he thinks, if it entails a collapse of the dialectic of the sexes in doctrine and church order. To lose that, I think he means, would be to lose a great deal of the church's dynamic and energy.

For instance, do we really understand what masculine images of God convey that feminine images may not, and vice versa? Feminists typically assume we do, but I doubt it. Ong is helpful here. If he is right, feminine imagery suggests no-

Life & death in California



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tions fundamental to the Christian experience of God: our source, the one to whom we are all umbilically bonded, who takes in, harbors, and keeps—as well as one who inspires and lets sons and daughters go in freedom. The Bible provides a goodly handful of such metaphors for God ("Can a mother forget her infant?...I will never forget you." [Isa. 49:15], and so forth). In contrast, as we have seen above, masculinity stands for differentiation and change. It follows that male images of God are entirely appropriate and indispensable to signal our own difference (or individuality) before the wholly other Holy One whose ways are not our ways, whose thoughts are not our thoughts—and who, accordingly, has a radical agenda for breaking idols and changing our world. In short, more is at stake in male images of God than the power of a clerical club. Also at issue is the iconoclastic God of the prophets.

The otherness of God, of course, is not the whole story. What is equally important (and perhaps neglected) is our participation in and union with God-Spirit—which feminine imagery may possibly convey more powerfully. Ong does not argue that point, but he does clarify why both women and men might want to retain a secure place for masculine religious metaphor—if only to secure a man's place in a church where, as I noted above, a woman can do virtually everything a man can do, including prophecy, without compromising her identity as woman. But the reverse is not true, and there's the rub. The danger of disenfranchising men is real, especially in machismo cultures where the terror of being swamped by the feminine is acute. In such a culture, men fear a leveraged buy-out by assertive first-world women of an institution that is already perceived as an exclusively feminine preserve.

The problem, as Ong puts it, is this: "To the psyche, the church is always feminine—Holy Mother church." In fact, so overwhelmingly feminine is the church that Ong sees the function of an all-male clergy as a "countervailing force," reassuring men in the person of a male priest that it is possible to overcome the fear of being absorbed by the feminine and still remain masculine. Mary's "yes, be it done unto me" is paradigmatic. For, just as it was through Mary's free consent to the divine initiative that the Incarnation occurred, so it is through feminine insight that Spirit enters the world at large. To this end, the rule is that all of us, both men and women, have to cultivate an inner life—a space for the Spirit to breathe in. In this respect, it has to be said that women, by reason of their anatomy and sense of interiority, have a distinct advantage over men—who, by reason of their need to separate from the feminine and prove themselves, are inclined to neglect inwardness. To become Christians, we have to overcome our fear of taking on feminine qualities, like the capacity to receive. "Macho insights," Ong charges, "reveal nothing of God."

In this regard, the sexually defined role of Jesus in redemption is illuminating. On the one hand, Ong affirms that Jesus' style is unmistakably masculine—differentiating, field-breaking, a lonely struggle to liberate in the truth. "I come into the world to divide it" (John 9:39). "My mission is to spread, not peace, but division. I have come to set a man at odds with his father, a daughter with her mother, a daughter-in-law with her mother-in-law" (Matt. 10:34-36). "I have come to cast fire upon the earth" (Luke 12:49). "He who is not with me is against me" (Matt. 10:30). And so forth. But that's only half of it, the other part being Jesus' nonviolence in going to meet, and enduring his passion. "Father, forgive them..." (Luke 23:34). "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46). "The masculine in Jesus' redemptive action," says Ong, "is complemented by his feminine strength-in-quietness—which is not passivity at all but free and active choice. Such free choice, free response...is what makes a woman in her 'quietness' appealing to a man....For such quietness bespeaks power." In brief, Jesus himself did not flinch at breaking the male mold and taking on feminine qualities.

In Jesus, then, we have an example of a man who overcame the compulsion to distance from the feminine, and consequently the need for bravado or dominance vanished as well. This would seem to imply, though Ong does not say so, that an all-male leadership in the church is a function of male insecurity. On the basis of the gospel, however, Catholic identity and institutional structure need not hinge on the protocol of women's subordination. Other, variant structures are imaginable—which apparently do not jeopardize Walter Ong's sense of manhood. "You fight these issues," he remarks, "hoping you can crush them. But by the time the news gets out, they're dead all on their own." □

Timothy Hodor

The Meaning of the Meadow

I lie in sleep
Morpheus leads me down to the dead of a dream.
He disappears, leaving me in a melancholy soul.
Sad ghosts of death come up to my heart.
I wade through faces of air, part blind eyes.
I come inside my brother. He doesn't see me,
But I see him oaring the black waters of afterlife.
He's a lonely man on a raft,
With no family members nearby,
And no mortal land in sight.
I paddle harder and harder
Until I realize there's no water under my feet.
I'm walking barefoot on beads of sand,
Which become morning dew.
The ground is cold today,
And I'm never going to meet my brother
On this kind of earth.

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YOUNG FOR HIS AGE

THE TUBE, THE MUSIC & THE SHADOW

Over the last few years, my g-g-generation has found an amazing new analgesic for the pang—and that's a serious word—of just sticking around. It's called television.

One of the very wisest things I've read is the very first sentence of Samuel Hynes's beautiful memoir of being a World War II bomber pilot, *Flights of Passage* (Beil, 1988): "Every generation is a secret society." That, for me, beats any sociological or biological definition of "generation" by a couple of furlongs. Forget birthdates. If you share the public secrets of a group—share them in Newman's second sense of "knowing"—then you're a member of that generation. If not, then not. It's why Saul Bellow, say, Nobel Prize and all, seems to be so irrevocably, culturally *prior to* Norman Mailer, even though their careers are nearly contemporary and Bellow (1915) is only eight years older than Mailer (1923). ("Prior" is "other": not better or worse.)

And it's why I (1942), though some five years early to be a baby-boomer, but always a slow developer, belong to the open conspiracy that has now ascended to power—media power, the only kind that counts—and that writes, produces, directs, and markets shows like "The Wonder Years," "Murphy Brown," "thirtysomething," and especially the brilliant CBS miniseries, "Middle Ages." And what those shows have in common are the Three Great Secrets of their targeted audience: television (in lower case because it's the medium in which we swim, our *real* environment), The Music (in caps because it is, beyond the possibility of quarrel, our mythology) and, seldom mentioned but always, intolerably, present, Vietnam (because it is our Shadow).

Little Danny Quayle sends his cholesterol-friendly, fundamentalist constituency into delighted shivers whenever he attacks the "media elite," but the fact is that he's a member, and a prime one, of the club. No white middle-class American born after, say, 1948, can help but be (generations, unlike other secret societies, *enlist* you). Because none of them knows a world without television, and a world where television was not somehow a crucial paradigm of "real life." (I can remember, vaguely, listening to radio shows with my grandfather, but that's my all-but-gone previous incarnation.) "I know it's true, Oh so true, Cause I saw it on T.V.," sings John Fogerty—of everything from Howdy Doody to J.F.K. in Dallas to Saigon and beyond. The arresting sixties' pre-teens in "Wonder Years" and their screwed-up older incarnations in "thirtysomething" have this in common, so deeply that it need hardly be articulated: their lives are bound up with the very medium that is reinventing their lives. That is also true, of course, of Slick Bill Clinton, whose Elvis-gig on "Arsenio Hall" may be one of the memorable moments of the presidential campaign.

Which brings us to The Music. A candidate playing "Heartbreak Hotel" on tenor on the Tube? Yes, and again yes. It was—and for once the phrase isn't P.R. hype—a defining moment. As Greil Marcus, probably our best cultural historian, keeps saying, rock-and-roll—innately subversive, generationally divisive, a mass-marketed insider's music (America creates such paradoxes)—was the communion (the Clintonesque "new covenant"?) that bound our youths, at least from the fifties to the seventies, together. Or as Chuck Berry, even more eloquently than Marcus, put it: "Hail, hail, rock-and-roll/Deliver me from the days of old."

But look at this tangle of thorns. The tube and The Music—*both*, of course, leviathan-like mass phenomena—are, or pretend to be, Abel and Cain. Television, from "Ozzie and Harriet" to "Cosby," has been preponderantly the carrier-wave of the "days of old," of those Velveeta-and-saltine family values that got the Republicans in Houston so sweaty. And rock-and-roll, whatever the lyrics may say, has always had one and only one message, articulated by one of its chief theorists, Jim Morrison, as "break on through to the other side." Without that brimstone whiff of anarchy, The Music has no moral point whatsoever.

So here are the boomers, growing up and being told that life is supposed to be a *very* long episode of "Father Knows Best," but also being told, with overwhelming force, "Have you heard the news? There's good rockin' tonight." A crucial—no kidding—point in our psychic history was when Elvis, in 1956, finally performed on the "Ed Sullivan Show" (against Ed's previous "read my lips" pledge), but was shot only from the waist up. Symbolic castration, anyone?

And then fell the Shadow. The boomers either fought or didn't fight in that indelible national disgrace: and even if they didn't, they did, hey? And learned—the good ones—that both the domestic suasions of the tube and the apocalyptic promise of The Music were dangerous half-truths (think about *Born on the Fourth of July* and *The Doors* as mirror-images of the great disillusionment). They grew, in other words, up: and that's always bad news.

And now, as I said, they run the networks and the ad agencies and they're old enough to be president. And the scary thing about getting that old is realizing that you're a flawed Abel—now *you're* the role-model you've tried so hard to imitate—or a failed Cain—now *you're* what you used to think you were rebelling against. If you're really cursed with smarts, of course, you find you're both.

Not that this isn't a rite of passage as old as consciousness itself. But maybe at no time in history has a generation had, ready to hand, a medium so exquisitely fitted to incarnate its spiritual climacteric. Both "Wonder Years" and "Murphy Brown" feature, every episode, a different song from the fifties or sixties to point up and embellish the theme of this week's installment. And—for viewers of the right age—the music is one of the *characters* in the screenplay, since the music as first heard ("Wonder Years") or the music as remembered from the vantage of fortysomething ("Murphy Brown") is always The Music: trivial, disposable, and also the shrine of what we'd hoped

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for and the measure of what we've lost. It's not nostalgia: it's a meditative exercise.

And then there's "Middle Ages." CBS had meant to run it as a summer miniseries, but because of a scheduling foul-up it's being shown on five consecutive Thursdays. And I hope it doesn't get renewed, because it's just too *fine* to fall into the clutches of weekly schedule hack writers.

Set in Chicago, it's the story of two boomers with good and boring jobs and varying degrees of marital bliss, who remember that at one point they wanted to be a rock-and-roll band. One of them (played by William Russ) decides, after all these years, he's going to do it. The other (played by Peter Reigert) is just trying, desperately, to hold onto his job as an appliance salesman, though he sympathizes with the idea of the band. Cain and Abel, both uneasy in their parts and both wondering if the game is worth the candle. It's a sensitive enough premise to be the stuff of a very good novel. And in its brave ambiguity about what is lost and what is gained, it's—rare for the tube or for any art—truly grown-up.

So what can I tell you? The evening after the two-hour premiere of the show, alone in the house, I poured a Lowie Dark, lit a Winston, sat back and listened to *Sergeant Pepper,* realizing that in clock-time the record was over twenty-five years old, that in subjective time it had still just come out yesterday, and that it was okay—I don't know how else to say this—for both things to be true. And I looked around the living room, for the first time comfortably, with the eyes of a fifty-year-old guy.

And know what? It ain't so bad. FRANK McCONNELL

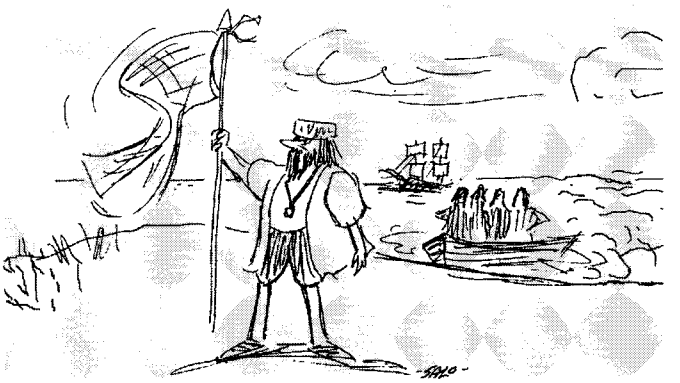
SCREEN

GOODBY, COLUMBUS

RIDLEY SCOTT'S '1492'

Perhaps it was inevitable. Making a movie about Columbus for this year of all years was bound to unnerve any filmmaker. Yet it's impossible to forgive what Ridley Scott has delivered. *1492: The Conquest of Paradise* exudes desperation, panic, and the sort of hysterical rhetoric that is born of desperation and panic.

The soundtrack by Vangelis epitomizes the giddiness of the movie while greatly adding to it. The composer is not without ideas but brings no taste or economy to their execution. He aims to make of the musical idiom of the American natives (or at least the composer's imagining of that idiom) an aural world that first lulls the European intruders, then traps them in a nightmare. But putting a synthesizer into Vangelis's hands is like introducing Al Capone to the Tommy gun. In both cases, the sheer volume of attack leads to terrorization. No actor in *1492* is allowed to speak without competing with a swelling sea of sound. No patch of nature can be observed by the audience in



"In the name of the king, I designate this a no parking zone!"

silence. Given any visual cue whatsoever (a raised eyebrow, a sip of wine, a witty epigram, the fall of Granada), the Greek maestro lets loose a sonic attack—a billion bees stinging each other to death—that the four horsemen of the Apocalypse might find difficult to live up to. Nobody either in the movie or in the movie house is ever allowed a moment of silence or even a chance to breathe at a normal rate.

But, though Vangelis is the virtual star of *1492*, he is not its chief villain, only a hired gun brought in to distract us from the confusion of his collaborators. He had his work cut out for him, because his fellow workers were evidently mighty confused indeed.

Scriptwriter Roselyne Bosch may have researched Columbus and his times in depth but apparently didn't arrive at a unifying vision of the man and his achievement. In this film, Columbus is, by turns, the Renaissance man hungering for knowledge ("I want to find out for myself!" he declares when warned about the unknown dangers on the other side of the ocean), the true son of the Catholic church, a gold-hungry *conquistador, and* a multiculturalist who wants to protect the lives and civilization of the Tainos tribe that has welcomed him to America.

Now I realize that Columbus was certainly a complex fellow and his actions may not have always squared, but there is a great difference between juxtaposing contradictory actions in a dramatically illuminating way and simply bouncing from one view of Columbus to another with no regard at all for dramatic logic. To portray the explorer as a humanist rebel, Bosch shows him running amok in a monastery's copying room as if all those abysmally medieval, vilely obscurantist theological manuscripts (or are some of them treatises on navigation?) were responsible for frustrating his petitions to Isabella. But once Columbus has founded a colony, his fervent construction of a cathedral is filmed so elaborately (with Vangelis pounding away, of course) that the scene becomes practically the centerpiece of the movie. Yet we never receive a real insight into Columbus's religious feelings and how his spirituality may have enhanced or mitigated or confused his questing spirit.

Worse still, Bosch wants to present the atrocities perpetrated on the natives but also wants to exonerate Columbus. So she invents a villain, based on the historical character, Francisco Roldán (a man never proven to have acted more criminally than Columbus), on whom she loads all the crimes often imputed, right-

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ly or wrongly, to Columbus himself. She has him lopping off hands, working slaves to death, and violating native women while Columbus only...well, what *is* Columbus doing while rape and rapine are destroying paradise? As far as I could tell, he seemed to be making the rounds of his colony without being able to understand exactly what was going on as Indians fell dead at his feet. I know that Columbus was as bad at administration as he was great at navigation, but was it necessary to make him a simpleton in order to exculpate his possible guilt? Or perhaps Bosch considers us simpletons? For when Columbus finally does perceive that all is not well and disposes of the villain, are we then to assume that all chattel slavery ceased in the colony? That all torture, rape, and mutilation were stopped? Is Bosch relying on the well-known fact that Americans don't read history?

Scott's direction is as confused as Bosch's writing. The crowd scenes at court bring out an unexpected clumsiness in a director who is usually visually acute even when working on lame scripts. He doesn't seem to know how to place bodies and camera so that we know exactly where to look amid the swirl and sumptuousness in the palace. Everything is clotted and confused. Scott fails with the voyage, too, treating it so elliptically that we don't feel the strain and fear of the crew as the fleet sails an unprecedented distance. Therefore, we don't truly feel the exultation of the men when they reach land.

Scott's desperation shows both in talky, informational scenes and in those of sheer physical sensation. Example of the former: when Counsellor Sanchez is hearing his secretary read a list of Columbus's demands, Scott has Sanchez putting a horse through its paces, so that the scene seems to be about equitation instead of Columbus's troubled relations with the Spanish court. Actually, the scene is about Ridley Scott worrying about his audience being bored when there's no sex or violence on screen. Yet the director is no better, in this movie, with action than with dialogue. When the new colony's cathedral is struck by lightning during a hurricane, a sign of God's anger at the colony's injustice, Scott stages the moment as if a gigantic ray gun had hit the church, so that *1492* momentarily turns into *Blade Runner*, an earlier and better Scott opus.

As the Admiral of the Ocean Sea, Gerard Depardieu gives not a rich performance but a rich actor's performance. He coasts on a lot of old tricks: the husky voice that turns feathery whenever the hero gets dreamy, the transfixed gaze of a hypnotized bull, the fluttering fingers. We've seen these before, used to finer effect. And Depardieu is defeated by English. Only about two-thirds of his lines are understandable. I long for the skinnier, hungrier, focused Depardieu of *The Return of Martin Guerre* and *Danton.*

The supporting cast is lackluster. Two performances stand out, for very different reasons. As the arch-villain, Michael Wincott is an unintended joke. It wasn't a bad idea to have the actor made up as an evil hippy with the voice of an obscene phone-caller, but Wincott's unvaried, self-caressing hamminess suggests that he not only lacks talent but has never laid eyes upon another human being. (As a sometime actor, I can testify that there are thespians who never take the least notice of their fellow passengers to the grave.) As Counsellor Sanchez, Armande Assante looks terrific, like a figure out of Velasquez, and speaks his mediocre dialogue as if it were a decent translation of Lope de Vega. In his final showdown with Columbus, a scene the explorer is supposed to dominate, Assante knocks Depardieu off the screen simply by employing focused intensity and crisp diction.

The only other hero of this movie is Adrian Biddle, the cinematographer. Most of his work here is as cluttered as his director's. But for a twenty-minute stretch, beginning with Columbus setting foot on American soil, Biddle, using Costa Rican locations, really does make us see the glistening America that the wondering eyes of the crew see. James Agee once wrote of the "soft shining of spring." Biddle photographs Columbus's New World as a place where such "soft shining" might be perpetual.

But the rest of *1492* betrays lack of nerve, lack of imagination, and lack of faith in a difficult but fascinating undertaking. Three lacks that Columbus, for all his many faults, never had.

RICHARD ALLEVA

Mark Kirby

Autumn: Evening Tennis

Taken pulling flowers,
Persephone,
her arms full of color,
Hades carried like a torch
into the underworld.

Now that sunset has settled
into evening, our play,
its mute gesticulating arcs,
slashes holes in the dark
where green is grey and yellow
is too

Dark swoons through a
fence of trees into
our school of motion
where character learns
the stubbornness of boundaries.

The racket is
an intransigent elbow
with which to make our designs;
and we are slowed by dark
and caution and punchy with misses,
and our time is short.

The fragrance of burning wood
is everywhere. Our playing ground
is cracked beneath us; random
grass spills out, smoke
from Persephone's torch.

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After the foundations have crumbled

CROSSING THE POSTMODERN DIVIDE
Albert Borgmann
University of Chicago Press, $19.95, 166 pp.

Christopher Lasch

Do we really need another book about postmodernism? Readers already surfeited with the subject will pick up Albert Borgmann's book with a distinct feeling of weariness; nor will they be won over by a dashing style, a dazzling show of wit, or a wealth of incisive social observation. If they persist, however, they will discover that Borgmann has important things to say. His voice, deceptively quiet and restrained, needs to be heard in a debate conducted, for the most part, by those who know only how to shout.

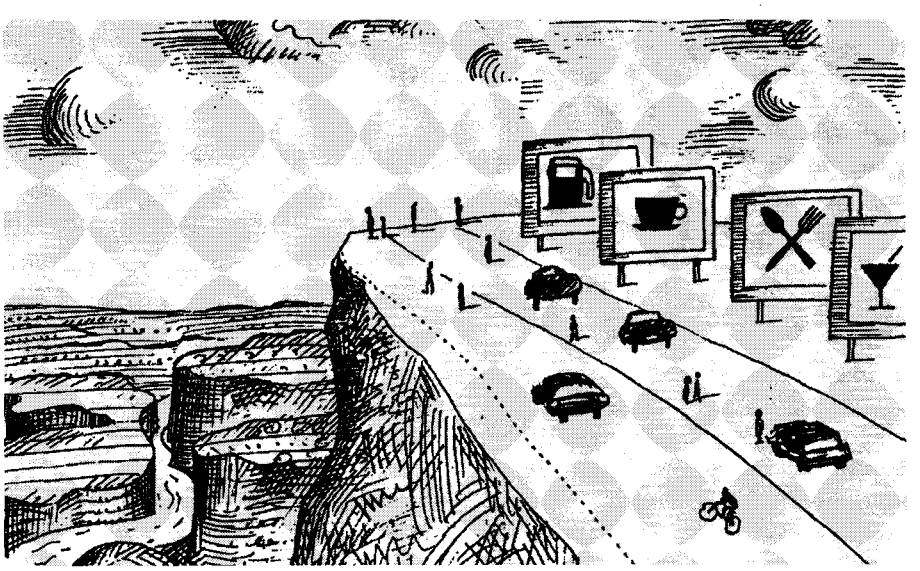
Borgmann makes no concessions to the casual reader—the typical reader today, unfortunately. His method of presentation is schematic (as he himself acknowledges), his language rather abstract, his erudition unobtrusive. Parts of the book need to be read more than once. In other words, an appreciation of its merits demands reading habits the loss of which is itself one of the characteristic features of the postmodern condition.

Borgmann's previous writings deal mostly with technology, from a broadly philosophical point of view, and he is more interested in technological and economic changes than in the changes of literary sensibility that have dominated so much speculation about postmodernism. He is quite aware of the work produced by literary theorists and philosophers, but he sees postmodernism as the product of forces over which professors have little control. He thinks that its influence, moreover, is reflected not just in new styles of academic discourse but in new work habits, new forms of economic organization, and new states of feeling that can be observed everywhere, not just in the ivory tower.

The collapse of the modern order can no longer be denied, according to Borgmann. The question now is whether postmodernism will prove to be merely a heightened version of the preceding epoch or a more promising departure, a completion and at the same time a revision of the modern project.

The essence of modernism, as Borgmann understands it, was the subjugation of nature, the search for universal laws of nature and for a universal morality (including social justice for all), and a respect for individuals—an insistence that people should be judged by their abilities and achievements and not by social origin or some other arbitrary measure of status. All three of these premises have now come under attack. Environmentalists argue that the violent campaign against nature, because it threatens to make the earth uninhabitable, is deeply self-defeating. Feminists link the domination of nature to the domination of women and seek to replace aggressive masculine enterprise with a feminine sensibility that values "relationships above rules, care above justice, and intimacy above the quest for individual identity," in Borgmann's words. Feminists condemn not only aggressive individualism but universalism as well, and they are joined by a host of others, ranging from sophisticated philosophers like Richard Rorty to ideologues of multiculturalism, in their claim that allegedly universal rules and canons of taste turn out to be highly particularistic on closer examination. Universalistic individualism comes under attack from communitarians as well, who argue that it has undermined the sense of mutual obligation and generated a war of all against all.

The effect of all this criticism, which shakes the foundations of inherited beliefs and habits, is to leave us alternately "sullen" and "hyperactive," in Borgmann's formulation. The originality of *Crossing the Postmodern Divide* lies chiefly in its elaboration of these terms, first introduced simply as descriptions of the current mood but invested, as the argument unfolds, with a good deal of interpretive significance.



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Sullenness reveals itself in truculent claims of entitlement, demands for compensation for past injuries, refusal to take responsibility for anything , and a rejection of both personal and political obligations—an unwillingness even to vote. The slackening of self-discipline and national resolve invites an equally unfortunate response: frenetic bustle designed to mobilize the economy and restore a sense of purpose. Hyperactivity, according to Borgmann, produces not only the familiar symptoms of stress and overwork but, at a deeper level, a kind of militarization of society—"the suspension of civility, the rule of the vanguard, and the subordination of civilians." Neither friends, neighbors, nor families are allowed to interfere with devotion to careers. For people in high-powered jobs, work becomes a form of warfare carried on by other means. Success belongs to the "vanguard" willing to sacrifice everything to its pursuit. "Civilians"—those unwilling to make such sacrifices—defer to the power elite, whose "hyperactive work habits" in themselves, without the additional qualifications of wisdom, courage, and vision, are held to certify their claim to leadership.

This way of life, so destructive of all the things that make life worth living, offers a foretaste of one of the two futures toward which we may be heading—"hypermodernism," as Borgmann calls it, in which the most unattractive features of modern society find exaggerated expression. The domination of nature is giving way to the simulation of nature, the creation of artificial reality—"hyperreality"—in which human control no longer encounters the intractable resistance of physical materials. Knowledge is giving way to "information," instantaneously available (indeed unavoidable) thanks to radio, television, computers, cellular phones, answering machines, fax machines, and all the other appurtenances of high-speed communication. "While the real world holds misery and grace, the hyperreal universe contains only news, challenges that demand one's reaction." It is above all the unrelenting need to assimilate and generate new information that makes hyperactivity the condition of personal survival in the global economy. Human intelligence is giving way to "hyperintelligence"—a new mode of understanding that takes understanding itself as its object, the real world having been replaced by the world simulated by computers. Human skills—memory, for instance, or the capacity for close reading—decay as their function is taken over by machines. In their attempt to eliminate everything not subject to their wishes and control, human beings unwittingly make themselves expendable: the simulation of nature leads logically to the redesign of human nature itself. Adding one more category to Borgmann's list, we can say that "man" (whose capacities were undeniably improved, in many ways, in the contest with nature) gives way at last to "hyperman"—a pitifully shrunken, driven creature wholly subservient to the machines that demand his frantic attention.

The only way to avoid this nightmare, according to Borgmann, is to respect the limits of human control and to reject the "insubstantial and disconnected glamour" of an artificial world wholly obedient to human desire. Borgmann's exhortation to rediscover the "limits of the land" and the general intractability of nature will strike some as a counsel of resignation. "The crucial task, however, is not simply to put up with the recalcitrance of reality sullenly and resentfully, but to endure it bravely if not gladly." Borgmann pleads not for resignation but for courage and joy. Let us hope the capacity to distinguish these states of mind, these opposing dispositions of the soul, is not another casualty of the postmodern transformation of consciousness.

Elaborating on Borgmann's military imagery, we can summarize the modern project, the modern delirium, as the final solution of the problem of evil—the problem posed, that is, by natural limits on human freedom and happiness, limits experienced as evil. Armed with the seemingly unlimited power of science and technology, the modern world dreamed that the war against nature would end with nature's unconditional surrender. But the war has dragged on longer than anyone expected, and the subjugation of nature (human nature as well) still remains in doubt. As always in protracted wars, the populace grows sullen and resentful, while the generals, still bent on total victory, escalate hostilities, deploy more and more destructive weapons, and call for renewed dedication to the cause.

In effect, Borgmann calls for a peace without victory—not to be confused with surrender. What distinguishes him from many critics of technology, especially from advocates of "deep ecology," whose position really does amount to surrender, is his "wholehearted commitment to the completion of the Enlightenment revolution in its social and scientific aspects." He accepts the most important postmodern discovery—that reality is shaped by human perceptions and that human thought cannot be understood, therefore, simply as a "mirror of nature." But if reality consists of a conversation about reality, as Richard Rorty argues, Borgmann wants to admit nature into the conversation (which of course is not the same thing as making war against her, though even that is better than ignoring her altogether). The conversation of humanity, as Rorty construes it, is "strictly human" and therefore one-sided. "Nature is utterly silent for Rorty." Borgmann asks us to let her speak—not as an adversary (as she speaks in the modernist tradition) but as an equal partner in the search for understanding and wisdom. In this sense he remains philosophically a realist—a "postmodern realist" but still a realist in his respect not only for the "intransigence" but for the "eloquence" of things. □

REVIEWERS

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AND OTHER LIFE SENTENCES

PARENTS FOREVER
You and Your Adult Children
Sidney Callahan
Crossroad, $19.95, 202 pp.

Kenneth L. Woodward

Sidney Callahan is often ahead of the curve. Back in 1965, she wrote a book about working mothers before most of the rest of us realized there was a problem. Now Callahan focuses on relations between parents and their adult children, land-mined emotional territory which is usually uncharted by the folks who churn out guidebooks on family life.

Callahan's title, *Parents Forever,* could be mistaken for a Mormon tract. Mormon doctrine, it will be remembered, teaches that marriage lasts for all eternity (God himself is married) and that those who are lucky enough to become gods themselves will spend the hereafter propagating "spirit children." Those of us who look forward to eternal rest and recreation can only pray the Mormons have it wrong on both counts. (Even Mormons, though, don't envision spirit children becoming heavenly adolescents.) These days, earthly parenthood alone seems to last an eternity. And that's Callahan's point: parents are never really relieved of parental concerns. We worry that our children will never cross the receding threshold of adulthood, then worry when they do. Anxiety, thy names are Mom and Dad. Which may be one reason why so many young adults are putting off parenthood until the last biological moment—or skipping that phase of life altogether.

This is a book for the *Moonstruck* generation: for parents who remember a time when relations between adult children and their parents were eased by established conventions (not the least of which were shared meals, as in the film, where intergenerational problems and sibling spats were absorbed and often healed over the breaking of bread) and who have lived to see most of those conventions frayed, if not altogether unraveled, by enormous changes in sex, marriage, and the family over the last three decades. It is especially helpful for parents who admire but cannot duplicate George Bush's extended family, want no part of Ronald Reagan's fractured family, and are properly dubious about the Clintons' "lifestyle partnership."

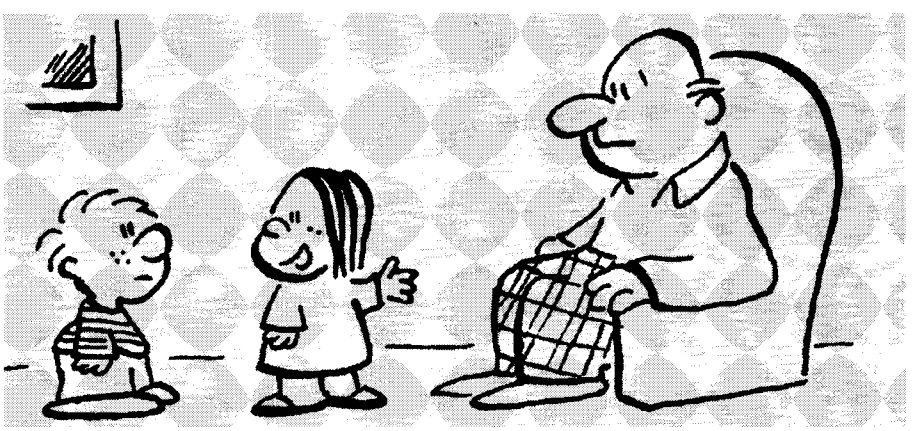
Callahan writes from the parental perspective; her voice, thank God, belongs more to the mother of six adult children than to the professor of social psychology. Which is to say her advice throughout is wise, humorous, and speaks with the only authority that counts—experience. My own copy now bears the marks that only really good books deserve: underlined passages on almost every page.

These days, parents and adult children can expect to spend as much as sixty years living separately together. How well they get along depends on many variables. Callahan wisely reminds parents that they need not like the adults their children turned out to be in order to provide the "attentiveness, empathy, and the will to further the well-being" of their offspring. Nor should they wonder why bad children happen to good parents and vice versa; even the best parenthood carries no warranties for parts or service. Good parents, she writes, have the task of encouraging in their maturing children "movement toward a grown-up family of equally competent adults who can found homes of their own if they choose."

For most middle-class Americans, her audience, the ideal arrangement is "separate households in a cooperative family network." Although it is traditional for parents to want to advantage the next generation's "social well-being," Callahan rightly warns parents to resist trying to gratify "adult children who think themselves automatically entitled to an upscale standard of living it took parents a lifetime of hard work to achieve." When grown but only nominally adult children return to the parental nest, Callahan resolves the problem of who sets household standards in favor of parents: "Parents do not assert their claims to authority solely on the grounds of age, property rights, or because they have more money, but because it is morally right that whoever has founded a family and put in years of committed effort gets to set the rules."

If parents are always parents, children are always, well, their children—which means that emotional conflicts are to be anticipated across the life cycle. Callahan has one basic rule for how to decide what to do or say when conflicts arise: treat your children better than you would your best friend. Tact, patience, and the old monastic "discipline of the tongue" are the virtues she counsels and exemplifies.

In a book of such modest length, Callahan manages to anticipate and discuss a variety of issues which confront families as parents and children readjust to aging,



"This is the head of our family—he's aged a lot in office."

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independence, and new forms of connection. How should parents react when their adult children shirk hard work; reject inherited religious beliefs; marry a slob; divorce; decide not to have children (grandchildren); opt for the other political party; or announce their homosexuality? On these and other painful subjects, there is no better book than Callahan's. If there is one subject she could have developed more thoroughly, it is the idea of leisure. How children and parents spend their time when it is theirs alone to spend says more, I suspect, about who those people are than what kind of work they do or how they handle sex.

Callahan is, as she says, optimistic about the future of the family. That is fresh air indeed in an age where dysfunctional families are the only kind most books address. Had the Bush and Clinton folks read Callahan first, we all might have been treated to an elevated discussion of family values. □

A THIRST FOR LAND & MOTION

WHERE THE BLUEBIRD SINGS TO THE LEMONADE SPRINGS
Living and Writing in the West
Wallace Stegner
Random House, $21, 227 pp.

Nancy M. Haegel

It rained in coastal California in July this year and, to my great delight, the hills turned ever so briefly green. That delight, Wallace Stegner might suggest, marks me as an Easterner, a foreigner who has much to learn from the place I now call home. To appreciate the beauty of the West, Stegner writes, "You have to get over the color green; you have to quit associating beauty with gardens and lawns; you have to get used to an inhuman scale; you have to understand geological time."

And then read Wallace Stegner. Even though Stegner's voice may be fleeting on a geological time scale, it has been enduring and discerning on a human one. Wallace Stegner has been writing about the West, in novels, essays, history, and short stories, for over fifty-five years. His most recent book, *Where the Bluebird Sings to the Lemonade Springs,* is a collection of sixteen essays in which Stegner writes about himself and the land he loves, and about other writers who share his passion.

All but one of the essays have been published before, yet this is a valuable collection of masterly crafted pieces. These essays should not perhaps be a starting point for readers unfamiliar with Stegner—better to first try *The Big Rock Candy Mountain* (an early novel), *Angle of Repose* (which won the Pulitzer Prize) or *Crossing to Safety* (his most recent and most personal novel)—but it is a collection Stegner collectors will want to have. One of its pleasures is reading Stegner on Stegner, sharing insights that bring added meaning to the main body of his work.

Stegner was born in Iowa in 1909. After a wandering childhood, early years of study and teaching and a voluntary departure from Harvard that endears him to true Westerners, Stegner arrived at Stanford and directed the creative writing program there. Although the official biographical information says that he retired from teaching in 1971, perhaps it is more accurate to say that he's made a life of teaching by writing and encouraging others to do so.

> *Migrants deprive themselves of the physical and spiritual bonds that develop within a place and a society. Our migratoriness has hindered us from becoming a people of communities and traditions, especially in the West. It has robbed us of the gods who made places holy.*
> —Wallace Stegner
> *Where the Bluebird Sings to the Lemonade Springs*

The first three essays in *Where the Bluebird Sings to the Lemonade Springs* are deeply personal. At times, Stegner writes when he wants to understand something himself, and his own life and relationships have been fertile ground for the growth of understanding. "Letter, Much Too Late" is an essay Stegner wrote fifty-five years after his mother's death. Although the letter is addressed to her, it can be opened by anyone who knows the desire to call out to those who left too soon and have been gone too long. Stegner remembers all the emotions and images that make the memory of his mother "at once a lasting presence and an unhealed wound." From its opening line—"Mom, listen"—the essay speaks with the powerful mixture of gratitude and regret, honesty and forgiveness and compassion and joy that comprises our most sacred relationships.

In addition to offering glimpses into his own life, Stegner opens doors in these essays to other writers who have been his companions in creating a literature of the West—Steinbeck, George Stewart, Walter Clark, Norman Maclean, Wendell Berry. Happily, the topic is now timely, as "Western writers" have recently become a subject of interest coast to coast. What critics are now discerning, Wallace Stegner has been saying all along—that Western literature is provincial only in the eyes of those who insist on limiting their own appreciation to other provinces. "My anguish," Stegner writes, "is potentially as valid as that of Oedipus; my love may be as tragic and romantic as Tristan's; my bond with the earth may have as lasting significance as Wordsworth's; my work, even if it is with cows, may have as much dignity as honest work anywhere." The West, Stegner insists, now has a vital literary life of its own and only requires critics "capable, by experience or intuition, of evaluating Western literature in the terms of Western life."

The Western life Stegner knows is defined by thirst, by land that is thirsty for water and people thirsty for motion. Stegner thinks a lot about water—or the lack of it. "Aridity," he writes, "more than anything else, gives the Western landscape its character." In a series of essays

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on the Western landscape ("Thoughts in a Dry Land," "Living Dry," "Striking the Rock") the writer, historian, and advocate come together naturally, and Stegner describes how aridity has affected patterns of settlement, farming methods, water law, and, perhaps most of all, our own ability to adapt in the West. "And what do you do about aridity if you are a nation accustomed to plenty and impatient of restrictions and led westward by pillars of fire and cloud? You may deny it for a while. Then you must either try to engineer it out of existence or adapt to it."

Stegner's experience has been that both the land and our spirits will be better off if we adapt more than engineer. One result of our engineering has been the unsustainable sprawl of Los Angeles, with Phoenix, Denver, and other cities not far behind. One thinks too of the salinization of California farmland, the draining of the water table, the use of Western land for military target practice and nuclear waste storage. In coming West, we marched like Israelites into the Promised Land, but Stegner is wary of the vision: "Pipedreams. Arrogant pipedreams. Why should the desert be asked to bloom?...The deserts were doing all right until we set out to reform them." To live in the West without ultimately destroying it, it is we who need reform.

Amid the concern for our present state and mourning for injuries past, Stegner is hopeful. Referring to those who love the West and the life they have there, he writes, "I believe that eventually, perhaps within a generation or two, they will work out some sort of compromise between what must be done to earn a living and what must be done to restore health to the earth, air, and water. I think they will learn to control corporate power and to dampen the excess that has always marked their region, and will arrive at a degree of stability and a reasonably sustainable economy based on resources that they will know how to cherish and renew....The feeling is like the feeling in a football game when the momentum changes, when helplessness begins to give way to confidence, and what looked like sure defeat opens up to the possibility of victory. It has already begun. I hope I am around to see it fully arrive."

Many, many of us, from east to west, hope so too. □

A GOOD PLACE TO START

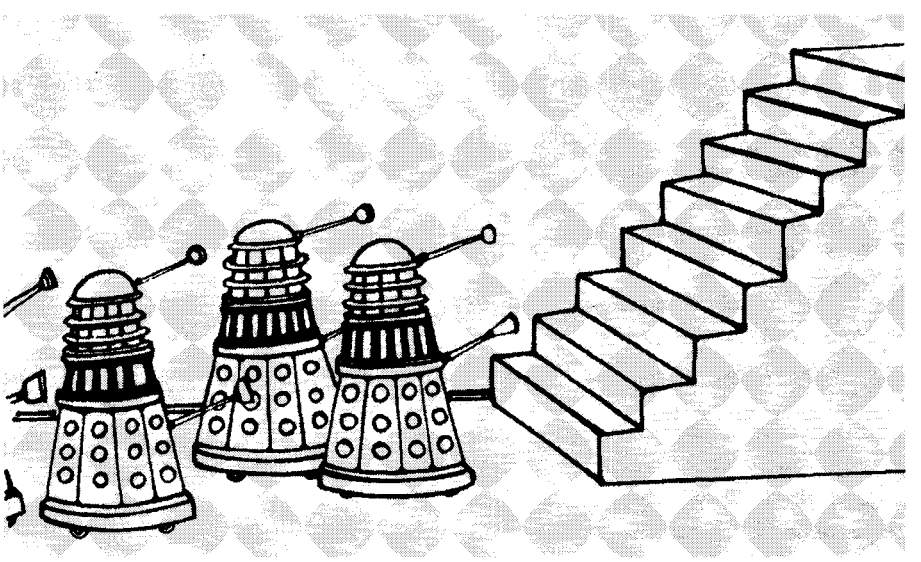
NEWMAN AND HIS AGE
Sheridan Gilley
Christian Classics, $39.95, 485 pp.

Joseph A. Komonchak

I was introduced to Newman some thirty-five years ago by two professors to whom I will be eternally grateful. For some odd reason one of the first essays I read was his study of the patristic notion of the Antichrist, and I can still recall the seductive power of Newman's prose. More central writings were part of an English literature course, and when I moved on to philosophical studies Newman's mind and example were there to assure me that there could be something more to Catholic thought than the rationalism of the neoscholastic *Cursus Philosophiae* by Charles Boyer (not the actor) we read in the seminary. Later, while studying theology in Rome, I was attracted to the thought of Bernard Lonergan in good part because he represented the ideal of a Catholic intellect that I feared had died with Newman; only later did I learn how much Newman had influenced Lonergan. My years in Rome were also the first two years of Vatican II, "Newman's Council," as more than one commentator put it. Later, when I had to undergo the trial of a dissertation, the labor was relieved by my being able to do it on Newman's ecclesiology. Newman has, then, been present throughout my adult intellectual life.

Sheridan Gilley's book is, I believe, the fifth or sixth biography of Newman I have read, and perhaps it is enough praise of it to say that it repays a reading even for those familiar with the best of them: Wilfrid Ward's defense of Newman in the midst of the Modernist crisis, Maisie Ward's emphasis on the young Newman her father had somewhat neglected, Muriel Trevor's two-volume love letter, and Ian Ker's recent excavations in the treasures of the thirty-one volumes of Newman's letters and diaries. Of them all Gilley's book is also the one I would recommend to anyone beginning a study of the great man.

Gilley distinguishes his work from those of earlier biographers in two ways. He wished "to put flesh on Newman's ideas, showing the relation of spirit to intellect, love to reason, mind to heart," but at the same time "to place Newman's intellec-



"Well, this certainly buggers our plan to conquer the universe."

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tual and spiritual development in its historical setting. It is about Newman, but it is also about his age." Newman the man emerges clearly in the personal drama that led him from a bourgeois Anglicanism into an evangelical fervor that was not lost but only redirected when he became a leader in the Oxford Movement's attempt to revivify the Anglican church. The recovery of the intellectual and spiritual riches of the patristic era eventually led him to turn to Rome as the heir of that patrimony, and throughout the last half of a very long life he was able to offer to an at times ungrateful church the service of a matchless mind and pen, pioneering in the exploration of the development of doctrine, the role of the laity, and the psychology of faith, seeking in all these areas to offer his age an image of a church broader and richer than a merely antimodern structure of authority.

Gilley tells this familiar story very well, but he is particularly good at placing this personal drama against the movements of the nineteenth century. Newman's lifelong campaign against what he called "liberalism in religion" was an effort to combat what today people call "secularization," the removal of religion from public relevance to the point that, as he regretfully noted toward the end of his life, religion was not to be allowed to be in any way "the bond of society." Gilley takes pains to explain the various battles in which the struggle was engaged, often offering helpful analogies from twentieth-century developments. If he does not hide his admiration for Newman—"the greatest of English theologians,...after Bunyan, at once the most profound and passionate of our religious pilgrims"—he neither romanticizes nor idolizes him; opponents get a fair hearing, and Newman criticism when Gilley believes it deserved.

Gilley has a knack for the telling phrase: Maria Giberne, Newman's close friend, was "the Pallas Athene" of his movement; the *Apologia* had the unintended effect of making Newman "both the Virgil and the Aeneas" of the Oxford Movement; Elgar's music for "The Dream of Gerontius" "might be called strangulated Wagner in an English chapel"; Manning and Newman, linked by contemporaries as inseparably as Gladstone and Disraeli, Dickens and Thackeray, Browning and Tennyson, were "the Martha and Mary of the Victorian Catholic church."

There are, of course, generous examples of Newman's memorable prose, both in sermons, in essays, and perhaps least familiar to many readers, in letters, which reveal the man beneath the public figure. When an enthusiast, preaching in his place at Saint Mary's, proposed that animals also be required to observe the fast days, Newman expressed the hope that the man might "have a fasting horse the next time he goes steeple-chasing." To begin an ecclesiology with the doctrine of the pope, he said, "is to begin to build Saint Peter's with the cross and ball." At the news that he might be named a cardinal, he recalled that Caligula had made his horse a consul, and wondered "would not the pope be reviving by his proceeding the memory of that extravagance?"

There is only one thing missing in the story Gilley tells. He does not pay enough attention to Newman's pastoral ministry, whether in his early years as an eager Evangelical minister at Saint Clement's or later as a leader of the Oxford Movement at Saint Mary's (the one great body of Newman's work that is still unpublished are hundreds of his Anglican sermons) or, still later, as superior of the Birmingham Oratory. Gilley focuses more on the public controversies and on the twists and turns in Newman's many personal relationships and somewhat neglects Newman the pastor. But this is simply to say that, even after this fine book, there will be room for still more books on Newman. □

IF WAR IS HELL

WHAT DOES THAT MAKE STARVATION?

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References & resources

Lawrence S. Cunningham

For the past month or so the six thick volumes of the *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (*ABD*) have sat on the edge of my desk giving me intense pleasure in their heft and solidity. Reference books are a joy to one whose mind is as promiscuous as mine, so I would reward myself each time an odious but necessary task was finished by a dip into the *ABD*'s pages *ad libitum*. That would permit me to read an article and follow up with the suggested cross references and having turned to them go on to their references, etc. One could pass a few leisurely hours browsing in this fashion.

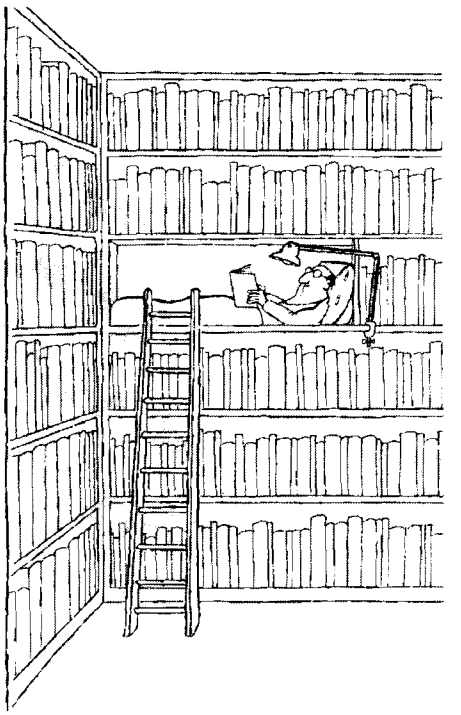
Thomas Aquinas may think that curiosity springs from laziness, but my notion is that it is a safe and sane remedy for busyness. At any rate, the *ABD* has 6,000 entries written by 1,000 contributors who turned in, roughly, 6 million words. The list of contributors reads like a "Who's Who" of biblical scholarship. Honesty compels me to admit to not having read all the entries but I have browsed through each volume with some small degree of thoroughness.

The Anchor Bible Dictionary, *edited by David Noel Freedman, Doubleday, 6 volumes, $360.*

The editorial preface tells us that the *ABD* reflects the current interests of biblical scholarship. There is a decided tilt toward essays of interest to social historians; thorough entries on archaeological sites; expanded coverage of articles on books outside the canon (scroll literature; Gnostic texts; pseudepigrapha, etc.). Conversely, the editors felt no need to duplicate the work of other reference works with exhaustive word studies like those found in standard volumes like that of Kittel.

My first attempt to find something in the *ABD* rather alarmed me. For reasons too complicated to explain, I wanted to read about games or sports in the Bible but no such entry existed under either term (one finds "games" in the one-volume Harper's *Dictionary of the Bible*) nor was there an entry under "dice" or "lots" or "running" or "racing" or "wrestling" or anything else I could think of that would help.

There are other oddities of this sort. The article on "sex and sexuality" makes no mention at all of the New Testament. There is an entry on biblical scholarship in Japan but none on such scholarship, say, either in India or Africa (India itself merits a short article; Africa does not get an entry as such). The entry on "iconography and the Bible" seems strangely uninterested in the New Testament (although there is a good entry on early Christian art and architecture where iconography features rather prominently in the body of the article).



These were small disappointments compared to the terrific things I did discover, rather serendipitously, like the article by Marvin Pope on euphemism and dysphemism in the Bible (there are plenty of both) with a concluding section on sanitizing strategies used over the centuries on biblical language. That led me to the section on "humor and wit" which turned out to have separate long entries on humor in Egypt and Mesopotamia (the latter culture may have had professional jesters) as well as the Old and New Testaments.

It should come as no surprise that in a reference book of this size, major topics get extended treatment. The entries on essential biblical places as well as the books of the Bible get authoritative treatment by leading scholars. The history of Israel from the period before the monarchy until after the Babylonian exile takes up fifty pages of double columns with references to about sixteen other articles that flesh out and advance that history. Significant cities and institutions (e.g., Corinth or the temple in Jerusalem) receive exhaustive treatment accompanied by useful schematics, maps, etc. One notes in passing, probably due to financial considerations, that there are few illustrations and none in color.

In the same volume as "Jerusalem," "Jesus Christ" gets twenty-three pages followed by lengthy articles on the quest for the historical Jesus, the actual words of Jesus, the teachings of Jesus, and an extremely interesting article on the worship of Jesus and how that worship related to Jewish monotheism. The latter article would be a useful first reading, for example, for any beginning theological student who would be inclined to argue for a full-blown doctrine of the Trinity or who expected too refined a Christology in the New Testament.

By and large, however, some issues of interest to the theologian are not promi-

LAWRENCE S. CUNNINGHAM *'s most recent book, from Paulist, is* Thomas Merton: Spiritual Master.

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nent in the *ABD* although the two articles on God in the Old and New Testament are panoramic and helpful. There are long articles on hermeneutics and the history of interpretation but, surprisingly, nothing on "inspiration" (not even prophetic inspiration; one does find a subsection on "prophetic experience" in the large entry on "postexilic Hebrew prophecy" and a few paragraphs on inspiration at the end of the article on "canon") or "inerrancy" or "fundamentalism." One does find an entry on "ecstasy" which is a good deal more satisfactory than the very disappointing and perfunctory one on "mysticism and the Bible" by the same contributor. Again, one notes the oddity of an article on "prayer" in early Judaism but none on prayer in the New Testament or in early Christianity. Conversely, there is a wonderfully full article on early Christian worship but none on Judaism.

An excellent series of articles under the general rubric of "Christianity" provides a wealth of historical material about the spread of the faith in the apostolic period. The general article goes up to the time of increasing institutionalization and the rise of criteria for orthodoxy/heresy (roughly the period of the Pastorals) while essays follow which consider the growth of the Christian church in Asia Minor, Egypt, Greece, North Africa, Rome, and Syria.

One could go on citing both the significant strengths and the small disappointments of the *ABD,* but let me summarize my impressions. First of all, it is an extremely important reference tool both because of the solidity of the contributions and the abundant bibliographies. In that sense it will surely be the standard reference work on the shelf of every public and academic library. Furthermore, one suspects that there will be no serious competitor to it within the foreseeable future (these works are just too expensive and time-consuming to do frequently) so that it will be a standard work to cite. The six volumes may seem a bit costly but already I have seen discounted offers being made by various booksellers. For serious students of the Bible it would seem well worth the investment.

On the other hand, however, the *ABD* does not substitute for (nor does it make any pretension of doing so) other works which pay far more attention to specific exegetical and lexicographical issues which help one with more precisely theological tasks. The *ABD* will find an honored place beside my copy of the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* but it will not replace it. I do think, in sum, that the *ABD* is a major contribution to biblical scholarship and it will prove itself to be a valuable asset to those who encounter the Word of God and attempt to make sense of it in a serious manner.

New Directions is the first of what hopes to be a multivolumed sourcebook series on missions, evangelization, Christian conversion, inculturation, and world ministries considered from the angle of the different

New Directions in Mission and Evangelization 1: Basic Statements 1974-1991, *edited by James A. Scherer and Stephan B. Bevans, Orbis, $16.95, 324 pp.*

Christian responses to these issues. If the other volumes are as useful, I would judge the series to be off to an auspicious start.

This first volume basically gathers together major contemporary institutional statements. The first section reproduces the major affirmations of the World Council of Churches over the last generation; part 2, by contrast, provides the major Roman Catholic statements beginning with the crucial *Evangelii nuntiandi* (1975) of the late Pope Paul VI marking the tenth anniversary of the conciliar statement on missions. Part 3 gathers together some very fine public affirmations and position papers of the Orthodox church (which are especially good on the relation of worship to mission). The final section gathers significant affirmations of Evangelicals.

This collection is a very rich resource not only because it brings together widely scattered documents but because of its usefulness as an instrument of study for both theologians and pastoral workers. What a contrast there is, for example, about some theological discussions on the unique role of Christ in salvation and the unvarnished declarations of the Evangelicals on mission. The Evangelical emphasis on direct witness and proclamation stands in counterpoint to the Orthodox insistence on the witness of the eucharistic community at prayer and/or the Roman Catholic interest in Christianity as an inculturated experience.

Standing behind these differences are differences in more fundamental issues of, say, Christology and ecclesiology. A volume like this not only helps us see the *status questionis* but, implicitly, reminds us how serious the task of the deep ecumenical theological discussion really is. A careful comparative study of some of these documents would help a great deal in setting out the tension points still unresolved in ecumenical discussion.

The Handbook of Christian Theology (1958) was a standard on the shelf of the theological tyro. In just over one hundred succinct essays, the basic Christian theological vocabulary was explicated. The editors of *A New Handbook* note that Roman Catholics, women, and a lot of other people did not appear in the 1950s' version; hence a freshly minted handbook begun from scratch.

The basic notion of the handbook goes something like this: pick a big topic and find the appropriate essay; that essay will lead one, in turn, to cognate essays which will provide a relatively broad sketch of a topic. Thus, for example, the two-page article on "Pentecostalism" refers the reader to Evangelicalism, fundamentalism, Holy Spirit, popular religion, and sanctification. Each article has a succinct bibliog-

A New Handbook of Christian Theology, *edited by Donald Musser and Joseph L. Price, Abingdon, $19.95, 525 pp.*

raphy and references, again, to other articles.

The entries I have read (honesty compels me to note that I am a contributor) are straightforward and nontechnical. Major articles (e.g., "Resurrection" or "systematic theology") run about five or six pages of text. Even on subjects as murky as "deconstructionism" or as formal as

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"theological hermeneutics" there is a genuine attempt to explain and clarify for the nonexpert. A volume like this is both a handy reference work for gaining a sense of the sweep of theological issues but could also be put to use as a kind of quick refresher course on contemporary theology. A volume of this sort is no substitute for reading original sources but as a handy tour of the theological horizon it is a useful and readable tool. I hope that it enjoys the same success as the original work.

MacHaffie had the good idea of producing, at reasonable cost, an anthology of original sources that deals with the role of women in the history of Christianity. The texts are arranged chronologically from the Bible down to recent times. She subdivides her material into ten large categories and prefaces each with a brief introductory sketch, a note on the source of her document, and, where appropriate, a biography of the person in question. Her texts touch on various historical periods (patristics, medieval, and Reformation) and are generously ecumenical in that Roman Catholic, mainline Protestant, Evangelical, and marginal groups (e.g., Christian Scientists) are represented. As usual, alas, the Orthodox world is unnoticed, which is doubly a shame both because of what is happening in Eastern Europe and because of such interesting materials on women from that part of the Christian world.

Readings in Her Story: Women in Christian Tradition, *edited by Barbara J. MacHaffie, Fortress, $12.95, 238 pp.*

Reviewers cannot resist telling authors how anthologies should have been done and this reviewer is no exception. If the author had omitted the biblical materials (easily accessible elsewhere) there would have been more space either to add significant persons omitted from this volume (e.g., Hildegard of Bingen, Clare of Assisi, Teresa of Avila, etc.) or staying with the current selections (one cannot include everybody) but making them longer. The biggest deficiency of this work is that the selections are too brief. Finally, since this work is quite clearly destined for classroom use, it would have been helpful to have added a bibliography, apart from the sources cited for each selection, since recent books on women in the Christian tradition have poured off the presses. MacHaffie's project, in short, is imperfectly realized but, one hastens to add, is still useful. It strikes me as the sort of work that students could be sent to get a broader vision of the history of the Christian tradition. That is probably how I will make use of this work: not as a primary text but one that will be on the reserve shelf as a resource for further avenues of study. □

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 2)

Christ said married couples "are no longer two, but one flesh. What God has joined together, let no one put asunder" (Matt. 19:6). And Saint Paul admonished husbands and wives, "Do not deprive one another except perhaps by agreement for a set time, to devote yourselves to prayer, and then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control" (1 Cor. 7:5).

Most couples today have to deal with many occasions of required abstinence. One or the other spouse may be away for extended periods (in military service, on business trips, caring for aging relatives); or both partners may have to work long hours on differing schedules in order to feed their families; or one partner may be aged or in some way disabled; or other responsibilities (sick children, for example) may require extra attention. In these and other circumstances, the spouses may be "put asunder" by man-made church law even during their limited time together.

Add to this the possibility (or likelihood) that one or both spouses are less than ideally mature; or that one is temporarily disturbed, clinically depressed, abusive, narcissistic, selfish; or that the marriage is suffering severe financial or cultural stress; or that the couple simply lack sufficient faith in the wisdom of celibate rule-makers. The church maintains that the use of any other form of contraception is wrong under all circumstances—even for those of other faiths or none, or those in polygamous cultures or truly exploitative relationships, thus effectively laying heavy burdens on the shoulders of the very women most in need of help and understanding. Pregnancy is not necessarily the most virtuous solution to such conditions.

In many parts of the world, where sanitation, clean water, privacy, and all the other facilities of our privileged "first" world are often nonexistent, careful education and potential improvements in natural family planning methods may indeed be the only practicable form of contraception most of the time. NFP also eliminates the substantial expense of other kinds of contraception (to the dismay of their profit-making producers). If the church could fully recognize this reality, it might contribute to improvements in the method, and to greater cooperation among all people of good will to help women everywhere understand and establish control over their own sexuality. Today very few doctors know anything about NFP and it is not even taught in Catholic hospitals and clinics.

But as long as flawed philosophical distinctions muddy the teaching, the church's doctrine is destructive of both Christian morality and married love. Assumptions about the meaning of natural law in this regard were formulated at a time when the age of menarche averaged five to ten years older than is the case today, when menopause occurred five to fifteen years earlier, and when most women (and men) died before age fifty. Further, the assumptions have to do only with particular acts, considered outside of any context, rather than with the significance of the entire marital vocation. An understanding of natural law not resting on an accurate understanding of the facts of nature is inherently flawed.

I am fifty-nine; my husband and I will soon celebrate our fortieth wedding anniversary. We have seven wonderful children, ranging in age from thirty-nine to twenty-seven, the youngest an interracial adoptee. We also have nine grandchildren,

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with more on the way. I became a Catholic in 1955, and believed in the church so firmly that thirty years ago I even wrote a letter to *Commonweal*, rather similar to William Talbot's. When *Humanae vitae* came out in 1968, I felt guilty that my own words in some small way may have helped mislead church leaders, because I had tried so hard to ignore the evidence of my own experience and the testimony of so many other women and men. I grieve that the papal decree helped precipitate a sense of excommunication for Catholics everywhere, including those of my own family: a disaster for Christ's mystical body which only time, much prayer, and compassionate clarification will remedy.

I now pray that the pope and all Christians may soon clearly recognize the complicated moral choices involved in a truly loving, responsible, and continually growing marriage, along with the necessity of focusing on *medical safety* (many contraceptives now in use are condemnable on this score) and on improved contraceptive methods (including NFP!). This letter, written in the spirit of obedience to Christian discipleship, is my small contribution toward that goal.

RUTH B. MOYNIHAN

Ministry & life

Anderson, Calif.

To the Editors: The supplement on the laity [September 11] leads me to remark that the Chicago Declaration of 1977 went astray in its expressions of concern about lay involvement in church-centered ministry. As the evidence cited by Philip Murnion indicates, the growth in professional parish staff has increased rather than lessened the level of involvement in every kind of ministry. In a typical parish setting, the employment of a few professionals brings at least a hundred other parishioners into participation in both the ministry of the church and ministry in the community.

A factor regularly overlooked is the effect of their work in church-centered ministry on the lives of individual ministers. Often those engaged as lectors are themselves deeply converted by the Word they proclaim. Those who assist in the distribution of Communion (especially in parishes with an active ministry to the sick and homebound) are similarly affected, and those who engage in the ministries of hospitality become icons of the need for connectedness in an anonymous and uncaring society.

Also overlooked are the expansion and development of ministry that would never happen in our parishes if left to "Father" or "Sister" to do. Lay leadership in catechetics, sacramental preparation, youth ministry, liturgy, social services, parish development, and a host of subministries would never take place if parishes did not encourage the sharing of lay gifts in the church's mission.

In parishes where there are, say, 100 eucharistic ministers, 60 lectors, 80 altar servers (of both genders), and ministries for youth, families, and seniors, the demarcation between church-centered ministry and secular affairs is blurred, resulting in the incorporation of the secular into the sacred. Without this melding, we face the danger of returning to the mentality that led to the rise of clericalism in the first place. If the parish is the domain only of "Father" and "Sister," and the people are to "pray, pay, and obey," there will never be a diffusion of our Catholic values into the world at large. That comes about only as a result of being changed ourselves by our involvement in ministry. Ask any lector or eucharistic minister to tell you how her or his everyday life has changed.

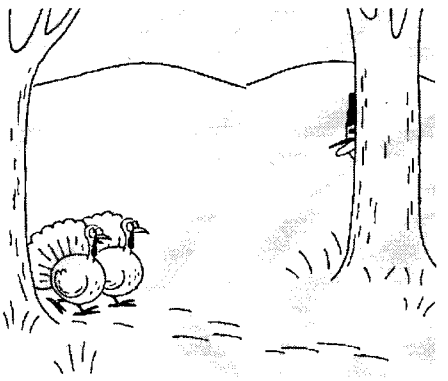
MIKE EVANS

Deacon Mike Evans is pastoral associate in Sacred Heart Parish in Anderson.

The saints still serve

Collingswood, N.J.

To the Editors: Despite eight years of Catholic grammar school education and four years at a Catholic college, any real education about the role of the saints in the church's history and in my own life was, for the most part, limited and even accidental. (My exposure peaked with choosing a Confirmation name; it reoccurs annually with the raising of a pint of beer on Saint Patrick's day.) After reading Richard Mazziotta's "When the Saints Went Marching Out" [October 23], I understand better why that might be.



"Pilgrim at ten o'clock!"

Despite knowing only the Christ-centered church the article describes, I believe that the saints provide a rich resource for all Catholic Christians. Looking to the saints reminds us of the struggles of many of our predecessors in faith. Treating Jesus as the "universal patron saint" in some ways does a disservice to the many who have lived their lives for Christ.

Many of us are torn between wanting to live as Christ calls us to live and wanting to live as our peers, the media, and the advertisers tell us we should live. While we struggle to be like Christ, the saints embody Christ. Through them we can learn more about both Christ and our faith. While Christ should remain very much the center of our faith, the saints continue to serve on earth by showing us how to lead more impassioned, fuller lives in Christ.

PATRICIA M. McDERMOTT

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